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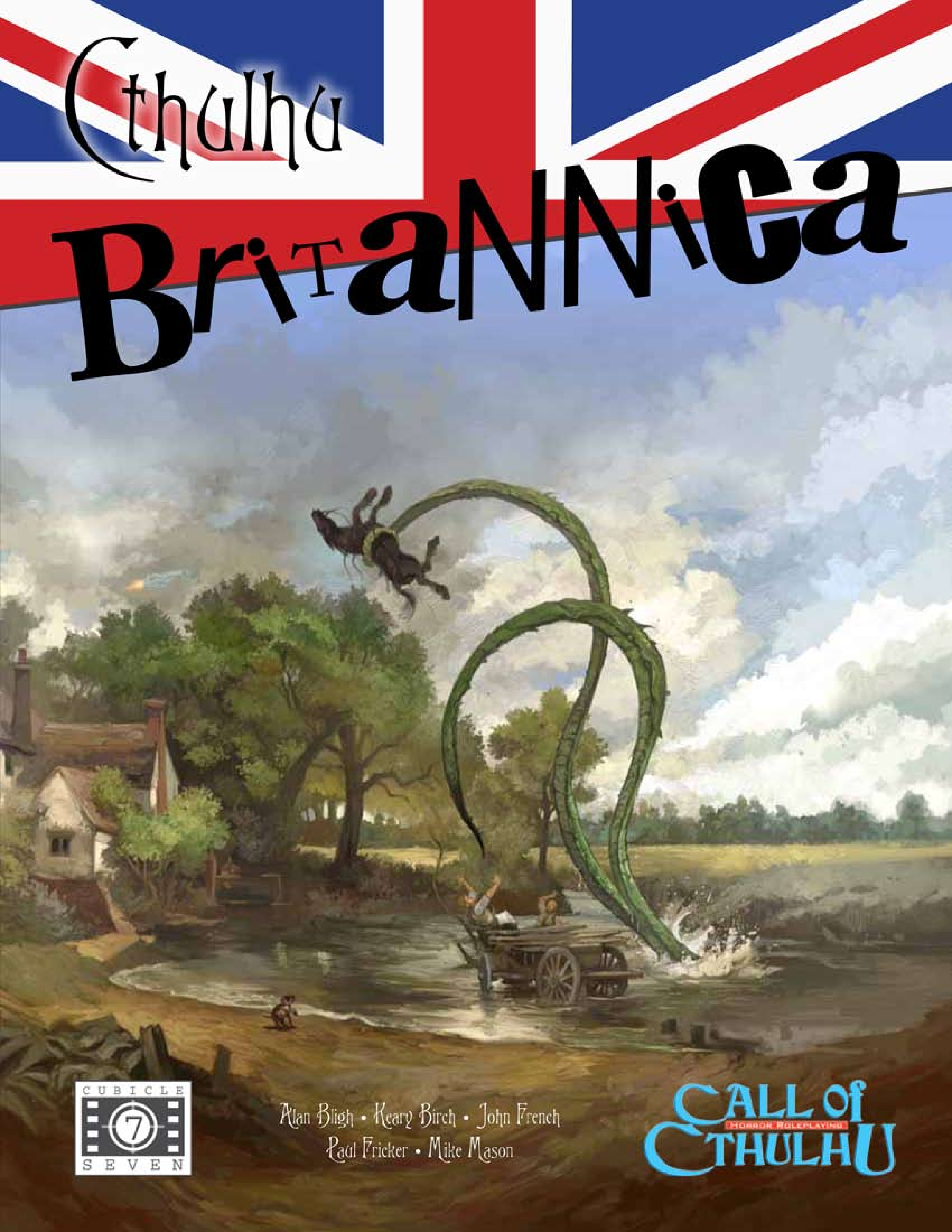
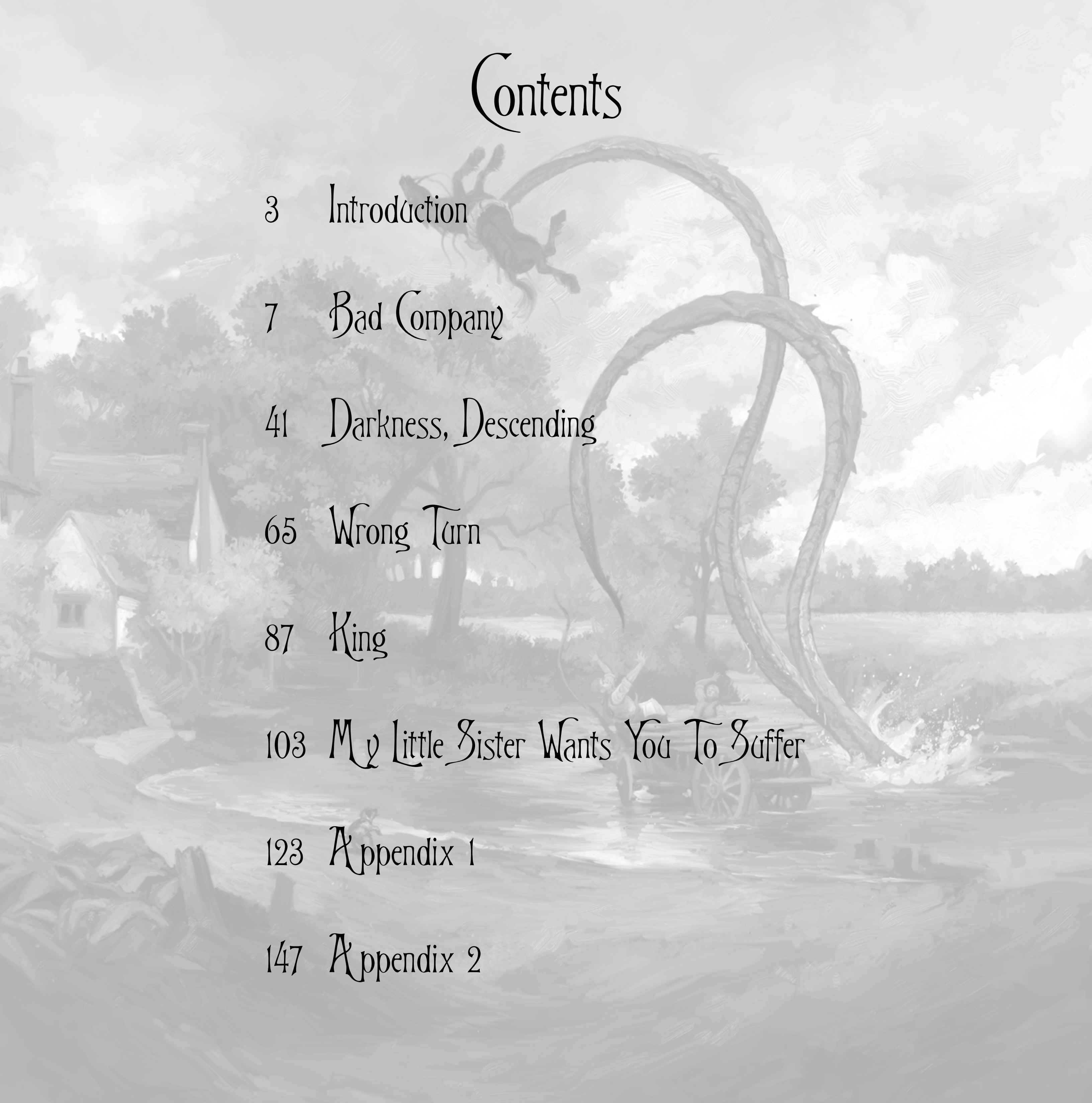


Alan Bligh • Keary Birch • John French
Paul Fricker • Mike Mason

CUBICLE 7 SEVEN

CALL OF CTHULHU
HORROR ROLEPLAYING

Cthulhu Britannica



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Credits

Authors

Mike Mason, Alan Bligh, John French, Keary Birch, Paul Fricker

Cover Art

Jon Hodgson

Interior Art

Aaron Acevedo, David Allsop, Rick Hershey (Cartography),

Jerome Huguenin, Linda Pitman, Chad Segesketter

Editing

Angus Abranson, Mike Mason

Proofreading

Nimrod Jones

Layout and Production

Dominic McDowall-Thomas

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If you have any comments or suggestions about the game, send them to info@cubicle7.co.uk

www.cubicle7.co.uk

Introduction

Welcome to this new collection of horror scenarios for the *Call of Cthulhu* role playing game. Here resides five tales of horror and the weird, set within the green and pleasant land of England. Each scenario focuses upon a different time period, from the streets of Victorian London to the far future when the End Times are almost nigh.

Firstly, ***Bad Company*** concerns the missing son of a peer of the realm. The investigators must watch their step as they descend into a world of greed, insane desire and death. Status and position are the very foundations upon which Victorian society rests and unless care is taken, the investigators may find themselves in very bad company.

Moving forward approximately fifty years, ***Darkness, Descending*** takes place in the 1930s amongst the splendid greenery of the English countryside. Archaeologists, come to unearth relics from Britain's dawn, find themselves at the centre of strange goings on. A simple case of theft? Or the foreshadowing of something far darker to come?

Wrong Turn brings us bang up to date with a contemporary tale set in a long abandoned radio telescope installation. A television production crew must spend the night amidst the cobwebs and dust. The investigators would be advised to tread carefully lest they wake the ghosts of the past, present and future.

Our penultimate scenario, ***King***, takes place in the near future at a private hospital. Seeing is believing, quite literally, as the investigators awake from surgery to realise that in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king.

Finally, set during the end of days in an insane future is ***My Little Sister Will Make You Suffer!*** In a galaxy gone mad, where cruelty and entertainment go hand in hand, the investigators must run the gauntlet of cruelty and deception if they are not to meet their end.

Somewhat different to most published adventure collections, each scenario comes with a set of pre-generated player characters, allowing all to be played with the minimum of effort. Whilst the pre-generated characters presented here are in no way obligatory, it is suggested that Keepers intending to use the scenarios as part of an existing campaign, or who wish their players to roll-up new investigators, should read through the ones presented here in order to better inform them of the roles, careers and skills that may prove useful in combating the varied dangers and mysteries to come.

Likewise, as often said, Keepers are strongly advised to read through each scenario at least two times prior to playing, in order to fully understand the plot, sequence of events and the themes involved. Adequate preparation is certainly essential for ***My Little Sister Will Make You Suffer!*** to ensure maximum enjoyment.

Throughout each scenario, the writers have included suggestions and further ideas on how to get the most out of the games. A myriad of hints, tips and play test experience are outlined, allowing each Keeper to use the ideas presented as a tool kit – taking what they find useful and embellishing it accordingly. All of the scenarios can be completed, as written, in one to two gaming sessions; however, Keepers will find suggestions for expanding the scope of the scenarios and also using them as springboards for further adventures.

"As to what is meant by "weird" – and, of course, weirdness is by no means confined to horror – I should say that the real criterion is a strong impression of the suspension of natural laws or the presence of unseen worlds or forces close at hand."

– H.P. Lovecraft in a letter to Frank Belknap Long, June 1926

A Note on Horror and the Weird

The scenarios, herein, should not be mistaken purely for tales of horror alone – they also, to a large part, embody the concept of 'the weird' and Keepers are urged to embrace this underlying theme and run with it. After all, many of H. P. Lovecraft's tales were originally published in *Weird Tales*!

"The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present, and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain -- a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space."
– H.P. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*

According to Montague Rhodes James (better known as M. R. James, the master of supernatural story telling), there are key ingredients that should be brought to bear in the writing of a good ghost story. For *Call of Cthulhu* Keepers, these necessary ingredients come highly recommended and have, to a large part, informed the writers of this book. But what are the ingredients?

Firstly, there is the atmosphere. Not the easiest thing to create whilst your players are pouring beer / fizzy pop / tea*, shooting the breeze and arguing about the merits (or lack thereof), of the latest movie / tv series / rpg game*.

No, atmosphere is something that must be cultivated and developed, and can only exist with the willing participation of all of the people around the gaming table. So, how to ensure the atmosphere will be right? Well, firstly make it known to the players that tonight's game (*Call of Cthulhu* is best played at night, is it not?), is a tale of horror and suspense – tell them that it isn't going to be *Carry on Screaming,* but rather an exploration of dark themes and spine chilling terror. Set up their expectations and warn them (sternly) that tomfoolery will not be tolerated in this particular gaming session. Then, set the example. As the Keeper of Arcane Lore, you must set the tone and build the atmosphere. Keep a straight face, lower your tone of voice, stare at the players, walk around the table, use pregnant pauses when you speak and dim the lights...

Throughout the scenarios in this book, you will find numerous hints on establishing an atmosphere. Some of these will strike a chord with you, whilst others won't – the trick is to take what you can and exploit it fully in your games. Don't be afraid to try something new or different, as this will often hijack your player's expectations, putting them at unease and making them more susceptible to the atmosphere you are attempting to build.

Secondly, James suggests that a *"nicely managed crescendo"* is valuable to a ghost story. That is, there should be a climax to the horror. Try to pace your evening of gaming, ensuring that as the light grows darker outside, the horror grows more intense around the gaming table. Build in an appropriate cliffhanger for the end of the session and remember to try to use foreshadowing to build the suspense. Of course, the aim is to have fun and moments of comedy work well as light relief, as well as working to put the players off-guard – allowing the Keeper to suddenly turn the tables and ramp-up the horror. The art of horror gaming, much like that of the horror film, is to make the players forget, just for a moment, that they are playing characters in a game. In that crucial moment, the player places him or herself in the position of the investigator, feeling the horror all the more acutely.

Thirdly, and incredibly important in my (humble) view, James states:

"Another requisite, in my opinion, is that the ghost should be malevolent or odious: amiable and helpful apparitions are all very well in fairy tales or in local legends, but I have no use for them in a fictitious ghost story."

(*delete as appropriate to your gaming group).

In this context, read “ghost” for the monster in the scenario – certainly each scenario has one! Friendly monsters don’t make anyone scared. Pretty straightforward that one.

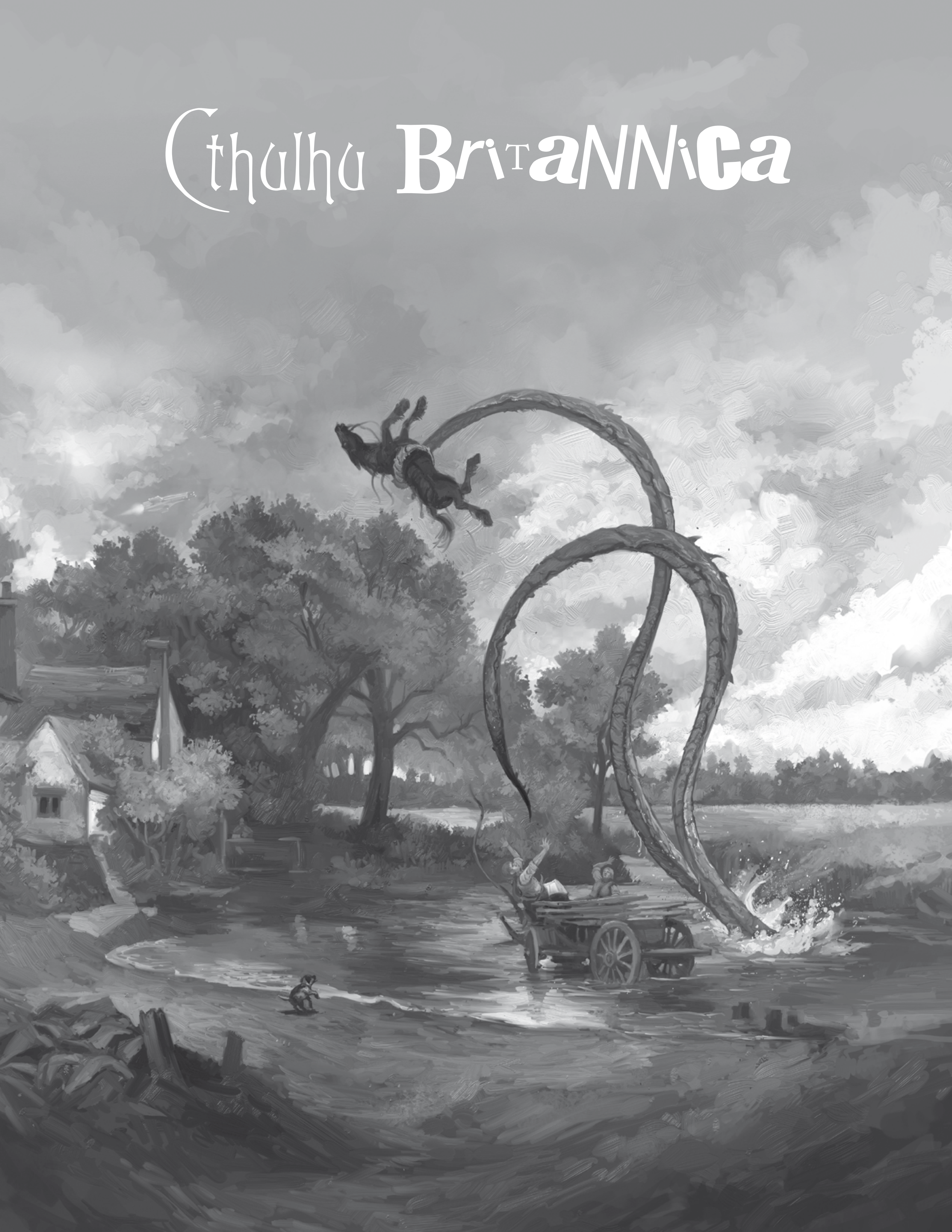
So there you have it. Five scenarios to delight and tingle your player’s spines. Be bold and run these adventures with gusto and your players will thank you for it. I’ll leave you with what I think is an appropriate line from the old gent of Providence:

“In London there is a man who screams when the church bells ring.”
– H.P. Lovecraft, *The Street*

Till them stars come right…

Mike Mason
January, 2009

Cthulhu Britannica



Bad Company

A Gaslight Call of Cthulhu Scenario, by Alan Bligh

Wherein the investigators are drawn in to a web of depravity and death lurking beneath the surface of Victorian Society while attempting to find the missing son of a peer of the realm.

Introduction

This is an investigative scenario designed for the Gaslight era (circa 1895), and set in London society during the summer months. It could, however, be easily transported to any place and era where social position is of paramount importance and the threat of scandal is a danger more serious than the reality of a murder or a disappearance of even a son.

Arthur Sommers, a young man of good breeding and high social standing, has disappeared; apparently kidnapped from his home in the dead of night. His father wishes to avoid a scandal that would doom his career and his family name and so turns to his son's friends – the investigators – to handle the matter discreetly and hopefully secure the return of his son.

Little does Sommers' father know that he is being lied to and a quagmire of depravity has swallowed Arthur. Beneath the façade of polite society a terrible and unnatural creature is slaking its hunger on the children of London's great and good.

The scenario is structured in such a way that it may be used either as a one-shot adventure or as the start of a new campaign.

The scenario is intended for use with three to six young, primarily upper-middle or upper class investigators; four pre-generated characters have been included for this purpose at the end of the scenario (see **Appendix I.I**). However, ***Bad Company*** may easily be played with Gaslight era investigators of your own design or as part of an ongoing campaign with a little modification. It may also prove helpful if at least one investigator has some medical knowledge and another having a military background (or, at least, has some substantial experience of fighting) – although this is not essential.

Keeper's Information

There is something inhuman moving through the dark shadows at the edges of fashionable London society. A terrible and ancient thing that wears a pleasing face. A thing that delights in leading foolish young men into depravity, madness and ultimately, death.

The name this evil goes by is the Madame Onlenia Byragan, known to some as an Eastern aristocrat who has come to the city to escape the turmoil in her homelands. Madame Byragan has ventured to the bosom of London's society, where her exotic beauty, quaint manners, oriental tastes and lack of a husband's presence have made her a feature of this season's talk. She has become a delicious and scandalous event in and of herself, that has given the fashionable ladies something to gossip about and the men of the gentry something to lust after. Already rumours abound about which rake or worthy peer has been secretly calling on her, and of licentious goings on at her private parties. Indeed, at least one young hothead has already lost their lives duelling over her affections.

The truth, unfortunately, is far more terrible. Behind the mask of seeming beauty, the thing calling itself "Madame Byragan" is an ancient and utterly inhuman creature. An entity of ageless guises and deceit that feeds on death and suffering to sustain itself. This entity favours the death of young men in particular and if the victims are highly born, so much the better. Since establishing herself in London under a stolen identity, she has gathered around herself a circle of depraved acolytes who worship her as a goddess. Byragan takes great delight in leading dozens of bright, moneyed and eligible men astray; delighting in depraving and corrupting them in order to sustain her taste for the high life (on the money extracted from them), before finally slaking her foul hunger on their bodies. Her depravations have been made all the easier by the endemic culture of secrecy that surrounds and chokes the Victorian upper class – the threat of possible ruinous scandal, coupled with her own misdirection, have kept her safe from discovery.

One of her most recent prizes is Arthur Sommers, the second son of Baronet Godfrey Sommers; a peer of the realm and minor government minister and, not incidentally, a personal acquaintance of the soon-to-be investigators. As the adventure commences, Arthur Sommers has gone missing in mysterious circumstances and (so far) his family has managed to successfully keep the matter out of the papers. Godfrey Sommers is a subtle and vengeful man, and so, when a note threatening to expose his son's mysterious disappearance arrives, his thoughts turn to not just to buying silence, but also to getting to the truth of the matter and the fate of his son. In order to do so, Godfrey Sommers turn to his son's old friends, trusting to their loyalty, character and discretion, rather than to some jumped-up grammar school boy turned policeman or Grub Street hack.

The blackmail note is not, however, from Madame Byragan or one of her confederates, but rather from another – a madman, killer and would-be sorcerer called Doctor Josef Salt. Salt, who in tracking down Sommers and Byragan for his own dark purposes, has bitten off more than he can chew and has provoked Byragan's wrath. Wounded and desperate, it is he that has sent the blackmail note that will draw in the investigators into the unfolding nightmarish events and point the way to Arthur's true fate.

As the scenario progresses, the investigators will be called upon to look into the disappearance of their old friend and pry into his life, presenting them with a number of leads for them to follow as they see fit. Their discoveries will draw them to the darker side of London society and, eventually, to an anonymous well-to-do townhouse in the Strand wherein resides a monster. Whether they will survive such revelations and arrive in time to save their friend, and avert a disastrous scandal, will be up to them to determine.

Attempted Shortcuts & Easy Answers

If, once embroiled in the dark mystery of Sommers' disappearance, the investigators lose their courage to continue, or retreat early and attempt to fob off Baronet Sommers or otherwise disentangle themselves from the matter of the missing man, the Keeper should feel free to make things much more 'personal' for them. For example, having the Straw Men come after the investigators much earlier that they might have otherwise, or directing events that effectively threaten them with incrimination and scandal (of a more mundane variety). This might include the threat of the law if, for example, they become murder suspects during the course of their adventures or the danger of a deadly scandal attached to their own names – the damage that this alone could wreak on their lives should not be taken lightly. One far more direct approach that can be employed to head off any attempts on the part of the investigators to retreat from the matter is to simply have Baronet Sommers murdered or disappear mysteriously. Alternatively, some of the witnesses that they have recently talked to also vanish or meet abrupt and violent ends – this could well leave the cowardly team with the prospect that they themselves are next...

Timeline of Events

–5 weeks	Arthur Sommers meets Madame Onlenia Byragan at a party following a performance of the *Duchess of Malfi* at the Orpheum theatre and becomes enraptured of her. Over the next three weeks he throws off his past acquaintances and circle of friends, and is seen about the town with her and her dubious coterie.
–3 weeks	Sommers writes his father a rambling note in which he professes his intentions to marry. His father replies tersely demanding to see his son, but receives no further contact from him. His father makes inquiries, discovering that Arthur has almost exhausted his line of credit with the bank, and that his friends cannot lay trace on him. However, rumours have already begun to circulate that Arthur is patronising an undesirable portion of "theatre" society.
–2 weeks	The Orpheum production of the *Duchess of Malfi* is cancelled after a series of unfortunate accidents and suspicious incidents, culminating in the disappearance of two cast members and the suicide of the producer and principle financial backer – a man named Frederick Milton.
–11 days	Sommers, now living in a narcotic haze, torn between elation and despair, his health and mind a wreck, is visited in his apartments by Dr Josef Salt. A blackmailer, disbarred medical doctor, back street abortionist and occultist who craves Byragan's power (without understanding what she truly is), Salt plies Arthur with a cocaine solution and employs mesmerism in order to bring him out of his daze and bend him to Salt's will. Salt confronts Arthur with evidence of his recent debaucheries (of which he has been largely unaware), and demands a certain painted triptych (that he believes is in Madame Byragan's possession) for the price of his silence. Sommers, reeling in horror and disbelief as his memories return in nightmarish glimpses, resolves to recover the triptych and confront Madame Byragan when he has recovered sufficiently, before taking the honourable way out to save his family's name.
–9 days	Sommers gains entry to Madame Byragan's house in the Strand during the early morning as a guest. Now freed from the web of illusion that previously snared him, he witnesses horrors that he cannot bear and makes a botched attempt to steal the triptych before fleeing for his life.
–8 days	Sommers waits nervously in his apartments for Dr Salt to make an appearance and to beg for his help. However, while arguing over what has happened, the two are attacked by Madame Byragan's servants – the Straw Men. A fight ensues during which Salt is wounded but manages to escape, while Sommers is taken alive back to the house on the Strand. In the aftermath of the disturbance the police are called to the house where Arthur had his apartment, finding evidence of some altercation and things in disarray, but no sign of Arthur. The police notify Arthur's father, who uses his Whitehall influence to get the matter swept under the carpet (which, as there is no evidence that a crime has actually been committed, poses no problem for a man of his standing). Arthur's father, disturbed by the turn of events, begins to make discreet inquires as to Arthur's whereabouts but can find no trace of him.
–4 days	Salt, in fear of his life and now stalked by the Straw Men, writes a desperate blackmail letter to Sommers' father (mentioning his son's slide into depravity and intimating that he knows his whereabouts, but mentioning nothing of the awful truth), hoping to extract enough money to flee the country and escape Madame Byragan's clutches.
–3 days	Having made discreet inquiries of his own, Baronet Sommers has discovered that his son is, indeed, missing and hasn't been seen since some altercation occurred at his home three days previously. The blackmailer has corresponded again; demanding the sum of five thousand pounds be delivered or the matter will be given over to the newspapers.
–2 days	Mr Clarence, the Baronet's representative and lawyer, travels to the blackmailer's (Salt's) suggested rendezvous point in order to pay the blackmail. However, Salt, suffering from his injuries, spies Byragan's servitors closing in and never makes the meeting, retreating in terror to hide out in the London slum district known as the Jago.
–1 day	Feeling betrayed and caught between fear over the fate of his son, dread of a ruinous scandal which could cost him personally, and the desire that some measure of wrath be visited on the blackmailer, the Baronet decides to call on those whom his son spoke of as friends in the past (and who seemed as though they might be "men of the world"), to act in this matter for him in order to see it concluded – without recourse to the authorities or the press if at all possible.
Start	The investigators are asked to attend a private meeting with Baronet Sommers and his solicitor, Clarence, in the Strangers Room of the Wyndam Club. The situation is outlined and the investigators charged with helping to find out was has become of their old friend Arthur.
Unfolding	From this point onward the investigators have free rein to proceed as they wish; however, their first port of call is likely to be Arthur's apartments as they are furnished with a key. Meanwhile, Byragan now stalks Salt and should the investigators encounter her malign forces on the hunt (and if they make sufficient nuisances of themselves), they, too, become targets for the awful Straw Men.

Player's information

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

> ***Arthur Sommers has disappeared – or so the rumours go.***
>
> ***He was well known to London society and from a good family of high standing. A man you were both happy and proud to call a friend. However, it has been over a month since you last saw him and longer still since you spent any proper time in his company.***
>
> ***When the first stories reached your ear, you hadn't quite believed them at first. Arthur, they said, had been seen in "bad company" –with rakes and dilettantes, gamblers and theatricals. Not to mention those rumoured to have less than salubrious connections to London's darker, sinister side.***
>
> ***When last you bumped into Sommers yourself, you could barely believe the evidence of your own eyes. He was a changed man; gaunt and feverish looking, erratic in manner and filled with nervous energy. He said that he was "in love" and planned to marry. The fact that he didn't even mention the name the object of his ardour struck you as rather strange at the time. He brushed aside all talk, except that of his newfound paramour. Yet, at the same time, there was a desperate edge to him that you found disturbing, frightening even. He left your company quickly, after making something of a sudden scene. That was the last you heard or saw of him until a dreadful rumour began to circulate a few days ago. A rumour that said the police had been called to his lodgings to find them in disarray and Sommers vanished.***
>
> ***It was with some trepidation that you opened a letter sealed with the mark of Arthur's father - Godfrey Sommers, Baronet and Government minister. The letter requests your attendance in the Stranger's Room of the Wyndam Club, to confer with him on a confidential matter of great personal importance...***

The Roll of Reputation in Victorian Society

Victorian society at its higher levels is defined by a vast interlocking tapestry of associations, political parties, clubs, guilds, colleges, old boy's networks, regimental ties, noble bloodlines, congregations and, at its most basic level, circles of friends and colleagues. These fellowships and cliques are the binding glue that makes the great city work. Admittance to these vital circles is not merely by money, deeds or even birth alone; above all, it is reputation – reputation born of a good name, history, and, most importantly, the good word of others. Without reputation, you are no one. Reputations can be made and they can be broken, all it takes to wreck a promising career or destroy a society position is scandal. Scandal is the death of reputation; it can bring ruin and ostracism. It can rob you of employment and credit, family name and even the company of those you were happy to call your friends. If bad enough, scandal will 'un-make' you, leaving you with nowhere to go and no one to turn too. Indeed, it is quite common for those whose family depends upon them to seek a swift and final 'exit' in order to head-off the matter, should such a fate loom.

Small wonder then that anyone who wishes to get on in life pays heed to how 'society' sees them, keeps their secrets well and chooses their associations wisely. Scandal, and even the rumour of scandal, can taint those connected to its source, no matter how peripherally. This can, and does, lead to some very morally suspect and often pitiless behaviour on the part of many members of the so-called genteel classes. Relatives that are considered an 'embarrassment' are often ostracised or simply put 'out of sight' – meaning that they are sent away, perhaps as far as the colonies or even the madhouse. Others might be driven to suicide, or equally drastic measures, to hide their unspeakable crimes.

Only the very poor and the obscenely rich can escape the scrutiny of Victorian society. The former because the worst is thought of them in any case, the latter because they have the power to cover up almost any sin or indiscretion - no matter how terrible.

Arthur Sommers

Having graduated from university a little more than three years ago, where he was known more for his facility for sports rather than for scholarship, Arthur Sommers became a widely known fixture of London society. Considered widely to be a 'bright young man about town', and regarded by most as a generous sort who made friends easily. He was eminently 'clubbable', to use the parlance of the day, with a wide circle of acquaintances and was even mentioned in the society columns as an eligible bachelor who, sooner or later, would inherit a very great deal of money.

If asked to describe an investigator's personal relationship with Arthur and his recent disappearance, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

When you first heard of Arthur's disappearance, you naturally worried, not only for his safety, but what might also come to light about his recent actions. With a tinge of guilt, you were concerned how any talk might affect those known to be his friends. The Arthur of old, as you had known him, was a bright, charming and thoroughly sociable young man, a generous soul. A man from good stock and a titled family, a man who had tried his hand at many things without much success. Then again, he had never needed success to get along in society. A man, in short, you were happy to call a friend.

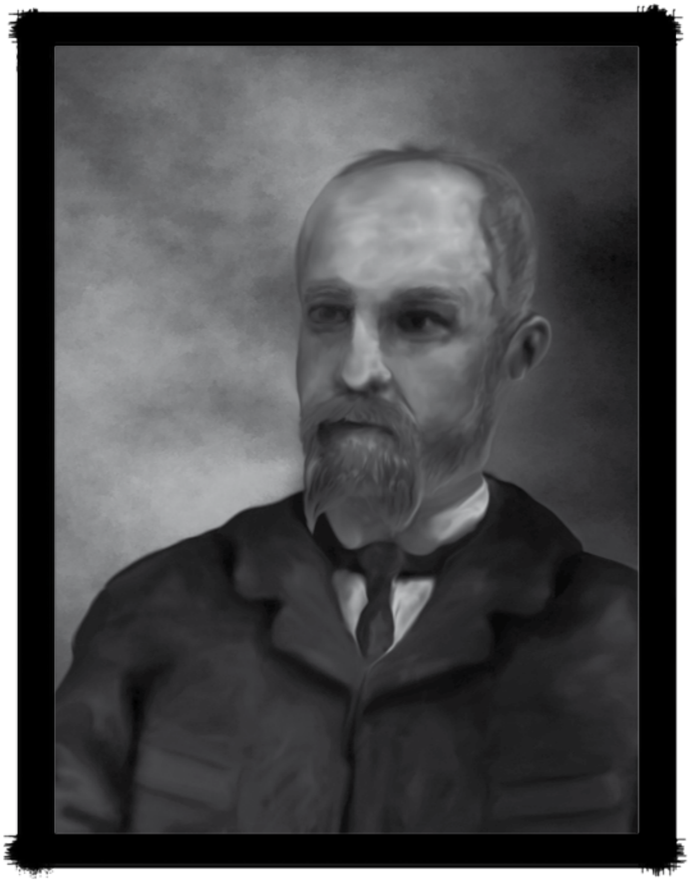
Part I: A Meeting at the Wyndam Club

The scenario commences with the investigators meeting the Baronet and his solicitor, Mr Clarence, in the Stranger's Room of the exclusive Wyndam Private Member's Club, off St James Square. There they will meet each other – all having Arthur as a mutual acquaintance. They are given a short time to avail themselves of drinks and cigars in a private room before Baronet Sommers appears, flanked by his aid Mr Clarence.

Sommers individually shakes hands and introduce himself to each of them, asking for their words as gentleman that what is to be spoken of between them will be kept in the strictest confidence. Only when satisfied on this point will he then turn matters over to Clarence to fully explain the situation.

Baronet Godfrey Sommers

Sommers is a tall, broad shouldered and dour man in his late sixties. Bald headed, with an iron-grey forked beard and sharp, flinty eyes. His mind is evidently quite active and acute; however, his breathing is somewhat rasping and his motions confined as he walks with a stick that's clearly not simply for show. His poor health is the result of a severe bout of tuberculosis earlier in life. He has a no-nonsense, formal manner and speaks as one who is used to being listened to and obeyed. In private life, he is a conservative type with few pleasures and alarmingly few vices, the chief among them being the acquisition of money and power – just because he plays by the rules in doing so, it makes him no less ruthless or ambitious for it. In business, he owns sizable stakes in several shipping and export companies that are the bedrock of his fortune, along with interests in some mining concerns in the colonies, and he is one of the 'names' of Lloyds of London. Since gaining his title (which is not hereditary), he has given much time and effort in recent decades to politics, serving as a Tory junior minister in the House of Lords. Although every inch the stiff-necked Victorian moralist, he is a man of the world and talk of depravity will not shock him or blindside him, though it will disgust him and earn his ire for those involved. He will have no truck with the idea of the supernatural whatsoever.



What Sommers Wants

In brief, he wants the matter of his son's disappearance resolved to his satisfaction, which is to say, his son returned to him (preferably alive) and that any prospect of public scandal, beyond the rumours that have already surfaced, completely averted. If neither of these things proves to be possible, he wants to know his son's fate and the identities of those that have brought Arthur to his end, in that order. If needs must he will pay the blackmailer, but would rather have the information wrung out of whoever 'they' are. If presented with incontrovertible proof of his son's death by violence, he will pass the information to Special Branch, the British Government's present security service, although this represents something of a final option and one likely to end his political career and be none too healthy for the investigators, either.

Mr Clarence

Clarence is an almost entirely colourless, humourless and nearly non-descript man in his late middle age. He talks over the bridge of his half-moon glasses with his head perpetually half-bowed. He has a careful, quiet, voice and is given to no inflection or emotion whatsoever when he talks, regardless of the subject matter. It is Clarence, rather than Lord Sommers, who does most of the talking in the interview, answering whatever questions to the best of his knowledge, but offering no in-depth opinion as to meaning. Clarence relates most of the facts as they are known and it is he to who the investigators will be expected to report to (either in person at his chambers in Westminster, or by note).

Mr Clarence's Briefing

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Gentleman, as you may have unfortunately heard, Arthur Sommers has recently disappeared under suspicious circumstances, some eight days ago. Recently, he had become somewhat estranged from his father and disquieting rumours reached our ears that he had been seen keeping company with some undesirable characters in the West End.

"What you may not have heard is that there appears to have been some form of altercation in Arthur's apartments the night that he vanished and that in the weeks prior to this event, his communications with myself and his father were infrequent.

"We feared that perhaps he had gotten himself into... ah... difficulties, and so we took steps to keep the matter out of the newspapers and minimise the possibility of police involvement. Avoiding scandal, as you can imagine, has been at the centre of our concerns, both for Arthur and for the Sommers' name.

"Four days ago, however, matters sadly took a darker turn when we received what appears to be a blackmail letter of some kind, making dark hints as to Arthur's fate and enclosing a key to his apartment as proof. As a result, we pursued what other methods of enquiry that were open to us but, unfortunately, we have drawn a blank.

"Left with no option in the matter, it was determined to pay the blackmailer for news of Arthur's whereabouts and to keep this villain's silence. I travelled on the Baronet's behalf to the rendezvous, as indicated in the note. However, I was approached by no-one for the money that I had brought. Since then there has been no further contact from the man, nor has there been any sign of Arthur. Frankly, we are at a loss."

At the end of the solicitor's explanation, Mr Clarence will explain that, as gentlemen and friends of Arthur – who, in turn, spoke highly of them to the Baronet in his correspondence – it is to be hoped that they would like to help locating the man or, at least, uncover what has befallen their friend by looking into the affair more closely and with alacrity.

Mr Clarence takes the lead in answering any further questions that the investigators have, deferring to the Baronet only for the most sensitive questions – see Keeper's Information and Timeline. Of course, neither knows or suspects anything of the supernatural nature behind what has befallen Arthur and neither do they have any concrete evidence as to his current predicament or, in fact, whether he is alive or dead.

If the investigators agree to aid the Baronet, Sommers senior thanks them and departs, leaving Clarence to take care of more practical matters. The lawyer provides them with the key for Arthur's apartment and an introductory letter (one per two investigators) from *Clarence, Stourbridge & Sons*, which should gain them admittance to the house and allow them to speak with the police officer who initially took the case. He also provides each of them with the sum of thirty pounds as a retainer fee to use,

Some Possible Questions Answered

The following are some brief examples of the kind of questions that the investigators are likely to ask at this point. The Keeper should feel free to embellish the answers provided.

Q: What happened at Arthur's apartment the night he vanished?
We are not entirely sure. Arthur lives in rooms in a very reputable lodging house in Islington. Apparently, there was some kind of disturbance there the night that he disappeared, which left his rooms in disorder. It was reported to the police by the caretaker and apparently one of the other tenants, a man named Borelli. However, the police found no sure evidence of a crime having been committed or, indeed, of where Arthur went.

Q: Who was the last person to see him before he disappeared?
The last reliable witness is Mr Giles, the house's caretaker, who spoke with Arthur on the day that he disappeared when he came down to check for post in the morning. The identity of any callers that he might have had on the night of his disappearance, and the seeming altercation in his rooms, remain a mystery to us and the police.

Q: What was this 'Bad Company' that Arthur was keeping?
The talk was that he had been seen with theatre people, foreigners and other bohemian types, although I can offer no definite names in this regard. He was believed to have begun frequenting salons and music halls of dubious repute in the West End and also attending gatherings and private parties on the fringes of London society considered to be generally unwise for someone of his station.

Q: What was Arthur's domestic situation?
Arthur was not married and not courting anyone in any serious way, nor had he been for some time. We are aware of a cryptic reference to Arthur meeting a lady of whom he had become enamoured, in his last letter to his father. He roomed alone and maintained no personal servants, considering his home to be his family's holdings.

Q: What was Arthur's financial situation like?
Arthur was well provided for; with a private income of some hundreds of pounds a year, the proceeds of stocks and bonds in his name, as well as a sizable bequest from his late mother's will. Disturbingly, Arthur appears to have drawn greatly upon his savings and credit in the last few weeks in a series of cash withdrawals to the sum of over a thousand pounds – for no obvious gain or purchase.

Q: Did Arthur have any enemies?
Not that we know of. Indeed, as you know, he was a very likable young man with many friends, although our own enquires did reveal that he had a falling out with one of his oldest friends, Peter Blaylocke, a few weeks ago (perhaps you know him?). Mr Blaylocke, apparently, is unwell at present, and we were unable to reach him directly, though we do have his address if you'd like to look into the matter further.

as they will, asking that they record any particular expenses that they incur so that he may reimburse them later.

The Lines of Enquiry

Clarence offers the investigators three concrete lines of enquiry, which they may wish to take up; Arthur's apartment, the police inspector who was called to the altercation that took place there, and the 'wrong crowd' that he had reputedly began to go around with. For the first two, Clarence can provide them with some help in the shape of the apartment key and a letter of authority, but the third he knows little about.

The Matter of Remuneration

Although Sommers is relying on the investigators past relationship, character and social class in order to bring them to his cause, he certainly doesn't expect their time to be free (because that's just the way the world works). He will have the matter of their recompense separately dealt with by Mr Clarence, who has been tasked to provide them a consulting fee of twenty pounds a day (no small sum), plus reasonable expenses. The real prize, however, is the goodwill of Godfrey Sommers, himself. He is an important and influential man, whose good offices and recommendation can open a great many doors in Victorian society.

London Society

It is entirely reasonable that the investigators, who each have some personal knowledge about Arthur Sommers, may well be aware of other mutual acquaintances, who might know more about what might have gone on (Idea rolls can provide this information). Keepers are encouraged to embellish the society dimension of this scenario as much as they see fit and are free to introduce additional clues or threads as they wish. From Arthur's other social connections, the investigators should hear variations on what is already known, including his recent infatuation (perhaps the name of Madame Byragan is even mentioned), more information on Arthur's descent into "bad company", as well as his spat with his one-time friend, Blaylocke.

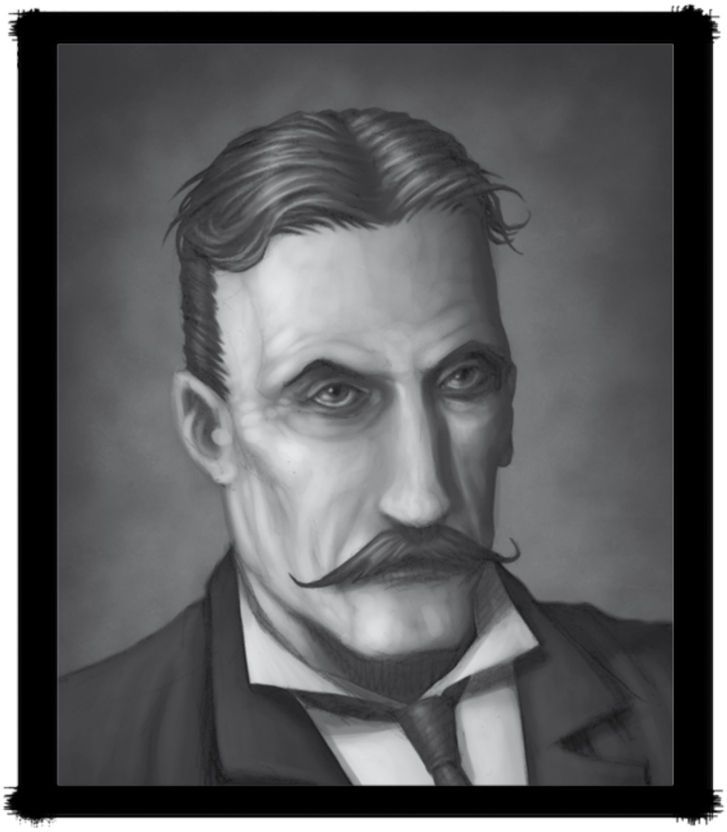
More salaciously minded interviewees might infer, from the questions asked by the investigators, that some hint of further serious scandal might be soon attached to his name, and accordingly seek to embellish their impressions or clam up entirely as a result, depending on who they are and how charming or diplomatic the investigators manage to be!

There is an optional events and plot hooks section found on page 23 that contains a number of potential leads that might be thrown up by diligent (or lucky) investigators during their inquiries that the Keeper can expand upon as they desire.

Abner Travisham

Abner Travisham is one of the London society contacts that the investigators may already have themselves, or be lead to by others in the course of their inquiries. Alternately, if they do a good deal of nosing about in high-class circles, Travisham may arrange a meeting with them himself, in order to satisfy his own curiosity as to what they are up to. Travisham is a source of information with his own dangers, albeit of a mundane variety – the danger of scandal that the investigators might hope to avoid.

Travisham is a somewhat notorious dilettante now entering into his early middle years. He has been a fixture of London society's social scene for some time and he is known for his impeccable refinement, extensive private fortune, viperous wit, and his taste for salacious gossip. Travisham, they say, *"knows everybody better than they would oft times wish."*



Travisham wields scandal as both a means of personal entertainment and, when he wishes it, a weapon. Though he certainly has no need of the money, he writes occasionally for the Times and the Globe on matters of fashion and etiquette, (and incognito for less savoury publications), and has destroyed men's (and women's) reputations before now, but is always careful never to bait a target more powerful than he can manage.

A highly knowledgeable source of information on the London scene, Travisham is no easy mark and will not give up all he knows at once. He must be asked the right questions before he volunteers answers and he demands information himself in return; either a truth no one else knows, a rumour confirmed or some other scandal (or scapegoat) that the investigators can offer him. Purely financial bribery is nothing to him and any attempts to threaten or intimidate him are unwise indeed. Clever investigators who succeed in getting into his good books might be advised to run new facts past him as they come to light to see if, with the volume of unconnected facts at his disposal, he can help them join them together.

If suitably questioned, he can give an absolute confirmation of Arthur Sommers spat with Blaylocke, that both attended an ill-famed production of the *Duchess of Malfi* at the Orpheum Theatre, where he saw Arthur. Additionally, he can relate that, afterwards, Arthur began to socialise with the show's backers, a dubious crew of *"bohemians and unsavoury types, paying court to some exiled Slavic countess or other, really quite passé."* He also knows that the production was abruptly shut down owing to the suicide of its producer, one Frederick Milton, and that at least one disappearance was spoken about among the crew *"but backstage hands rate little by way of interest or dependable fact, do they?"* If asked further about the production, Travisham mentions only one other individual of note in attendance *"slumming it"* on the production; a somewhat infamous artist of the macabre named Bartholomew Maxwell, who provided the painted backdrops – *"really the best thing about the show."*

Travisham is reluctant to be drawn directly on the subject of Madame Byragan and feigns ignorance of her name; frankly, he is somewhat frightened of her and her coterie whom he has met socially and assiduously avoided close contact with since. He believes them too dangerous to be worth the trouble. As for the lady herself, he couldn't shake a feeling of revulsion and dread in her presence although, of course, he neither knows nor suspects the truth. Only if particularly well handled, or frightened by unfolding events which threaten to drag him in (for example, if the investigators go looking for Maxwell on his information), does he reveal her name and can, if desired, find out both the address of her house in the Strand and arrange an invite to a gathering that she is likely to attend.

Travisham is every inch the perfectly attired and accoutred gentleman. Handsome and indolent, and yet there is something watchful and cold, almost lizard-like, beneath his studied calm and often spite-laden wit. Travisham can be found moving between various salons, parties, functions and performances in the evenings, whilst during afternoons he can be found dining at the Geneva Club in Pall Mall, where the investigators might seek him out. Travisham is also well insulated from the harsh realities of life by his own wealth and position; he discreetly employs several bodyguards as servants and will not allow himself to be placed in any physical danger.

⁂

Part 2:

Certain Shadows on the Pavement

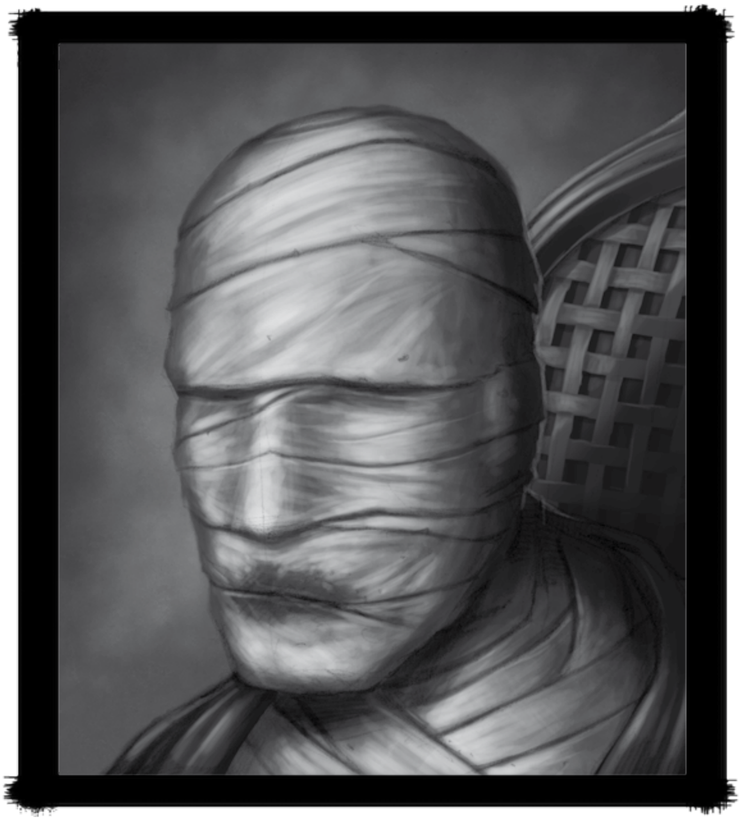
The following section details some of the main avenues of enquiry and clues that the investigators are likely to follow in looking into Arthur's disappearance. As this is an open-ended investigation there is no right or wrong order in which these leads should be followed. Not every group of investigators will follow them all, although one may naturally follow from another. Indeed, the investigators may wish to re-visit old ground if new information comes to light and this is perfectly fine. However, malign forces are also moving which at first the investigators will be blissfully unaware of. As they dip deeper into the events surrounding Arthur's disappearance, the more they are likely to attract the attention of the dark powers who have taken him and who still search for the blackmailer, Dr Josef Salt.

Once the investigators have come to Madame Byragan's notice the clock is ticking, whether they know it or not. It is then just a matter of time before the Straw Men come for them and their fate is sealed – unless of course they can learn the truth about Arthur's disappearance and track and defeat the monster in her lair.

Mister Blaylocke is Unwell

One lead in the matter of Arthur's disappearance is his falling out with one of his oldest friends, a man named Peter Blaylocke, who may also be a mutual acquaintance of one or more of the investigators as well. The talk will has and Arthur, who had been a best friend since their public school days, as having a falling out and nearly coming to blows while attending a society function at the Guild Hall some four weeks ago. Further successful enquiry hazards that this falling out was over a woman. From this time onwards, Blaylocke has apparently been seriously "unwell" and is confined to his mother's house in Kensington.

If the investigators visit Blaylocke's home they discover perhaps the first horror of many to come and one that London society has conspired, for the moment, to keep quiet. They find Blaylocke under the care of his overly hospitable and forcedly cheerful mother, and her frightened looking servants with a haggard and slightly worse-for-drink looking elderly doctor on hand. His mother in particular is "*happy that some of Peter's friends have come to visit"*. She also tells them of plans to take Peter to the Alps *"for the air."*



Peter is in a shocking state and can be found in a sitting room, attended by a grim and slightly drunken doctor. They find Blaylocke propped up in a bath chair, swathed in black with his entire head covered in bandages, including his eyes and mouth. The linen is fresh, apart from an ugly rust-brown stain that forms a circular impression, roughly where his mouth should be.

Further questions to the mother indicate the fact that she is also 'chemically assisted' at the moment; utterly delusional about what has happened to her son, *"he will be well soon."* Further, tactful, questioning of the doctor or servants reveals that Peter was simply found "in this state" in his room a fortnight ago. The police have not been informed. Investigators making a nuisance of themselves are firmly, but politely, sent from the house. If approached and questioned by another medical man, the doctor displays open horror and fear, confiding that Blaylocke, *"should be dead by rights already*", and that much of his facial tissue, and other parts of his flesh, have been, *"harried away… gone."*

Peter Blaylocke

The Peter Blaylocke that the investigators may remember (or learn of) was an active, fit, man in his early twenties. A keen amateur athlete who had secured a junior position of some note with a merchant bank and whose family, while not titled, were very highly respected. Blaylocke now, however, is a frightening, mutilated wreck of a man. He cannot speak and is far from lucid and in such awful agony that all he can do is to (badly) scrawl a single half-formed cryptic word or two, such as *"PAIN"*, *"SIN" "SHEE" "HEL ARUR" "BAYB" "STAW*" and perhaps *"KIL E",* with a pencil stub on a piece of paper – the Keeper should feel free to do this in person. He becomes violently agitated if pressed or if his bandages are interfered with, more so if the theatre is mentioned. When disturbed in this manner, he begins thrashing back and forth in his chair, moaning dreadfully as fresh blood blossoms under the bandages where his eyes and mouth should be, bringing the doctor to hurriedly intervene and apply morphine to knock out the agonised man.

The Police Involvement in Sommers' Disappearance

If the investigators seek out the policeman who was called to the altercation at Arthur's apartment (Inspector Bridger), they find that he knows very little about what actually happened that night. Bridger attended the scene after a beat policeman was called to the disturbance by the custodian of Sommers' lodging house, a Mr Giles, who feared foul play was afoot. Bridger witnessed that a disturbance had indeed taken place, took statements from such witnesses as were available and examined the apartment, but found no prima facia evidence of a serious crime having taken place. Having been told by Giles who Arthur's father was, Inspector Bridger logged the incident, made sure the premises were secure and left matters awaiting further orders. His superintendent subsequently 'popped by' and dropped hints that this matter was "nothing of importance", leaving Bridger to bury the open case file on his desk until something more tangible, such as a dead body, turns up.

Inspector Bridger

Bridger is an East End boy made good, a former NCO in a guards regiment, he joined the police force and worked his way up about as far he will ever go – thanks to his lack of education and accent. He's a brawler and an 'honest copper' as far as it goes, with a thorough familiarity with London's criminal element. He has no illusions that his job is to maintain order, not to enforce the letter of the law without fear or favour.

If approached reasonably, and with Clarence's letter, he will be frank about what he knows (which is precious little). Only that there appeared to have been an altercation or struggle of some sort in Sommers' apartments, but that no signs of theft or proof of serious violence were evident. He dismisses the wilder assertions of Marcus Borelli in the upper floor as the ravings of a *"highly strung artistic type, and a foreigner, as well, subject to all sorts of superstitious nonsense."* If asked for his opinion, he says that he believes that Arthur Sommers might have *"taken on some kind of fit, or gotten into fisticuffs with an unknown confederate. No doubt because of strong drink or some affair of a personal and intimate nature. I've seen it all before."* If pressed in a suitably diplomatic manner, Bridger implies, as subtly as he can, the possibility of drug abuse or the effects of a similarly dissolute lifestyle on Sommers, and that it is his expectation that the man will either turn up a wreck in some opium den, Turkish bath or be found floating face down in the Thames sooner or later.

With the right leverage and if presented with the right evidence once the events are well under way, Bridger might be convinced to help the investigators more directly, particularly when bodies and strange incidents start piling up. But, mindful of his own career and what might be at stake in a wider sense, he will try to do so 'off the books', providing backup, access to resources and indirect assistance, rather than taking the whole thing over as a police matter –after all this is an adventure where the players have centre stage, not the NPCs!

Visiting Arthur's Apartment

Perhaps the most obvious and potentially fruitful line of enquiry is for the investigators to go to Arthur's apartment, themselves, and see what they can uncover. Note that such action brings its own danger, as the house is still being covertly watched by the Straw Men.

Arthur Sommers rents an apartment in a three story Georgian townhouse in the London Borough of Islington; discrete, spacious and well appointed. The upper three stories are rented out as three furnished, private apartments to bachelor men of quality. All are accessed by a single central staircase, while the floor sunken below street level contains the rooms of the house's caretaker and cook (a middle-aged couple called Giles), who are employed by the landlord who sees to the needs of the tenants as part of their rent. The lower floor also contains the house's kitchen, furnace, boiler and coal room in the basement.

The Watchers

Having extracted the details of Salt's attempted blackmail plot from Sommers by methods best left undescribed, Byragan wants Salt as a plaything for his insolence. As a result, at all times, the streets around Arthur's lodging house are being watched from the shadows by one of her Straw Men. This may manifest as an 'uneasy feeling' by an investigator with a high POW score, but the illusion that conceals the Straw Men is a strong one and they are very difficult to spot. The investigators, in the course by their activities, are now likely to peak Byragan's interest and she has them followed for some time in order to determine their intentions, before sending her Straw Men to collect one or more of them as she wills.

Below Stairs

Although kept scrupulously clean, the sub-level and basement of the house are noticeably shabbier and far less well-appointed than the apartments above. They are the home of the Giles, a middle-aged couple retained by the house's owners (a faceless London property concern), to maintain the building and see to the basic domestic needs of the tenants as part of their rent agreement.

Mr & Mrs Giles

The Giles's are a plain couple in their late middle-age; he is formerly a paper hanger by trade but was forced into early retirement by failing health whilst she is a housewife and cook. They are deferential and cautious, employed by the building's owner to maintain it, manage laundry and see to the basic domestic needs of the residents of the building. They are professionally 'blind and deaf' to the goings on above them (as is only proper), but they genuinely did sleep through the events in question. They are courteous and polite but distant, and completely unhelpful in any matters of their tenant's business or personal lives.

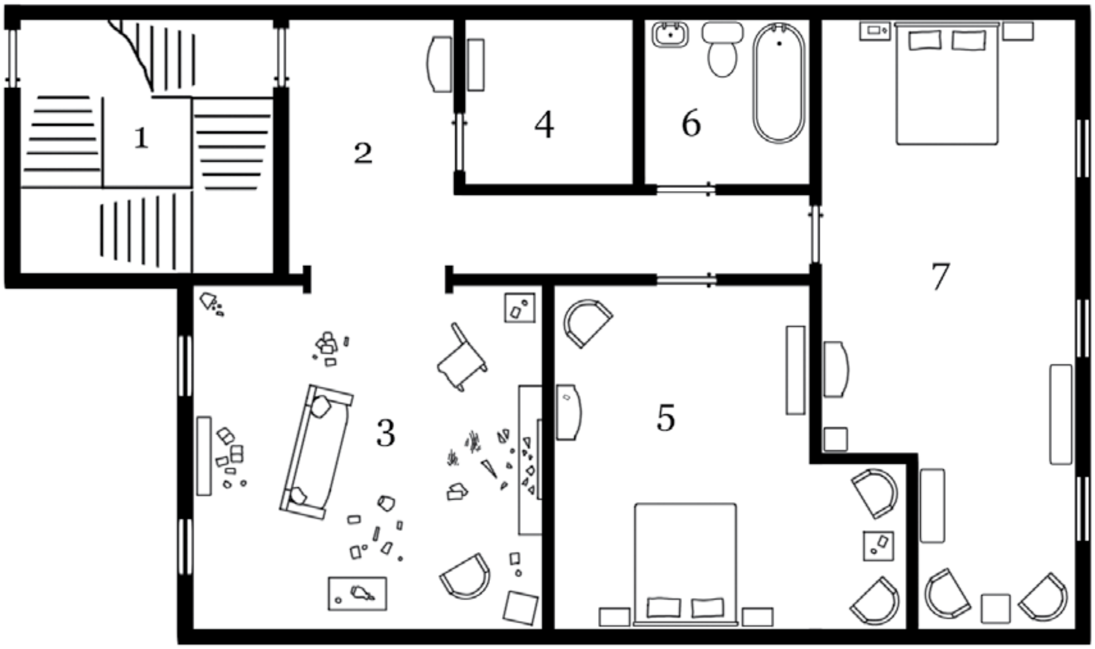
The Ground Floor: The Empty Apartment

This floor is rented out under the name of Travers, its occupant is only known by sight as a grey looking middle-aged man with a weather-beaten face. He is often away for long stretches on business on the continent, as he has been for the last month and a half. The apartment remains shut tightly and locked.

The First Floor: Arthur Sommers' Apartment

Arthur's spacious apartment has a large sitting room/study, a cloakroom, two bedrooms and a water closet, all leading off a small central hall. There is no sign of forced entry; however, the sitting room is wrecked, with items and furnishing strewn about the place. Two armchairs are overturned; the light fitting is out of kilter and the contents of a bureau spilled out onto

Arthur Sommers' Apartment



1. Building Entrance
2. Foyer
3. Sitting Room
4. Cloak Room
5. Bedroom
6. Water Closet
7. Arthur's Bedroom

the floor. Several scuff marks and scrapes might be noticed (Spot Hidden roll) in the floorboards, as if several people had fought in the room.

There are several pertinent details that may be noticed in the apartment with the right attention and/or Skill rolls. The Keeper should embellish or add clues, as appropriate. Possibly more of Arthur's personal effects, for example - maybe showing a connection to, or triggering a memory from, one or more of the investigators.

- **Signs of Violence:** There is a single arcing blood splash against the dark flock wallpaper and a few blood spots on the floor heading to the door. This went unnoticed by the police. If an investigator with medical or military expertise is present, they can conclude that it is likely a "back trail" from a cutting weapon of some sort. Given the absence of more blood, or a body, it's likely a superficial cut that bled more as the victim left the building in haste.

- **The Hidden Letter:** There is a heavy bookcase against one wall of the sitting room, which appears to be one of the few articles of furniture in the room that hasn't been disturbed. The books inside are of the type bought to 'fill shelves' and, aside from a few bound collections of Punch, appear largely unread (some still need their pages cut). One book, a hefty looking tome, entitled, *"My Years Among the Natives"* by the Rvd. W.F. Baines, has been left out beside the shelf. Placed securely between the pages is what appears to be a blackmail note (see **Player Handout 2**).

- **The Broken Mirror:** The mirror, over the mantle in the sitting room, has been smashed. Close inspection reveals a small calibre bullet lodged in the mirror's backing.

- **Straw:** Observant investigators notice the somewhat incongruous element of a handful of dry straw, which smells of faintly of cloying perfume, on the floor in front of the mantle.

- **Waste Paper:** The waste paper basket has apparently been overturned, in one corner, by the struggle. Searching through it reveals the crumpled results of several, somewhat poor, attempts to write poetry; eulogising the beauty of *"this Eastern Empress of Dark Splendour"*, etc., and some more recent looking papers that seem to be half-started letters to Arthur's father; often getting no further that an opening line, written in a noticeably far shakier hand.

- **The Pistol:** This can be found unused and unfired on the nightstand in Arthur's bedroom. It is a brand new Webley Mk I .455-calibre revolver, complete with receipt, a lacquer-wood case and cleaning kit (purchased for £3 4/6 from J.J. Fenks & Co. of the West End). The pistol is freshly polished and has clearly never been fired. There is a box of 24 shells and it appears that Arthur has spent some time trying to cut crosses in the bullet heads with a penknife.

- **Theatre Program:** On the dressing table in the bedroom, as well as a gentleman's usual accoutrements, is a cheaply printed theatre program for a production of the *Duchess of Malfi,* which ran as last month's production at the Orpheum Theatre. Underlined in the program is the producer's name, Frederick Milton, with a note scrawled in pencil beside it that reads, *"Her Escort according to A.T!"* The "A.T." in this instance refers to Abner Travisham (see page 14), a noted dilettante and infamous society gossip who also attended the play that night, and with whom the investigators are likely acquainted (if only by reputation), if they are from an upper class London background. Determining this identity from the initials alone is difficult, requiring an INT x 2 roll – or the right questions asked of others (Mr Clarence, for instance, knows that Travisham was known to Arthur, but has forgone pursuing the link himself, owing to the risk of scandal that he perceives inherent in doing so).

The Second Floor: Marcus Borelli's Apartment

The second floor, while a mirror of the first, is slightly smaller in dimension and comprises the rented apartments of Marcus Borelli. Decorated in a somewhat florid, continental style with numerous heavy velvet drapes and a clutter of musical and classically influenced objet d'art and portraiture.

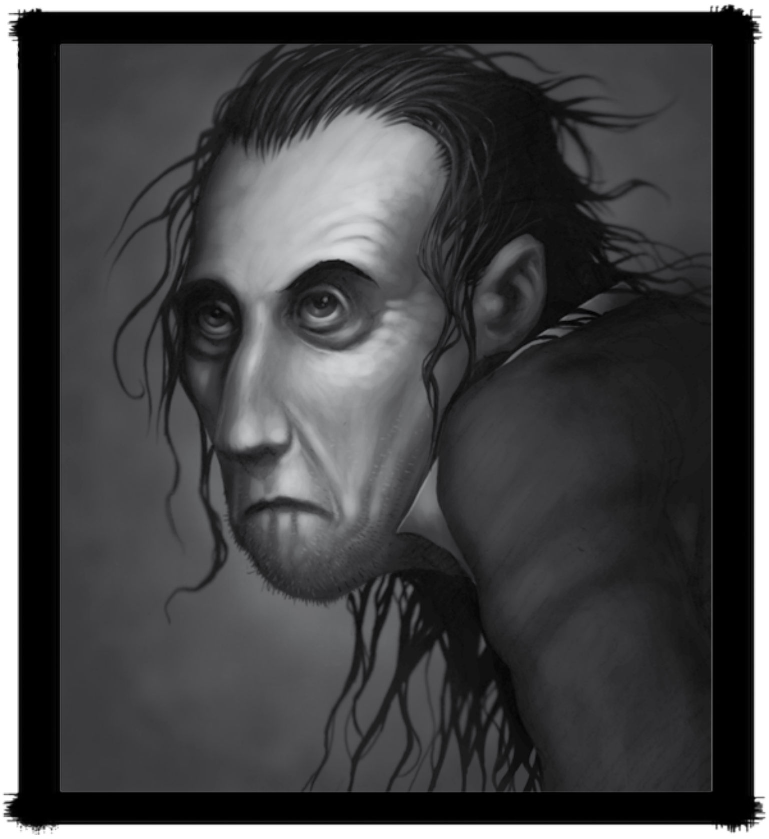
Marcus Borelli

Borelli is a concert violinist of some note and would-be composer of somewhat less worth. He is something of a tortured soul, slight in build with long, straggling hair and large, watery eyes. He is in his early twenties but looks considerably older, thanks to a lack of regular sleep and general ill health. Borelli is, at turns, nervous and frenetic, and subject to *"a weakness of the heart",* which he ascribes to his physical condition and general maladies of the mind.

Borelli's Testimony

Borelli is the one who reported the incident in Arthur's apartment to the police and is, it would seem, the only witness (if somewhat removed) of what transpired. The police did not take his somewhat hysterical story entirely seriously, but he happily recounts his rambling, semi-coherent tale at length to anyone who might care to listen. The key parts of his testimony are as follows:

- At around nine o'clock on the evening of the incident, Sommers received a guest. Borelli was *"meditating and taking the air"* at the time in the chair by his open window. It was a warm evening and he couldn't get to sleep.



- The visitor was there for approximately three hours before the incident occurred. Borelli could hear them talking, often with raised voices, in what he describes as an '*unfriendly manner',* but he could not hear (nor cared to hear) what they were saying.

- A little before midnight, a carriage pulled up outside and somebody entered the house, (he heard the front door open, seemingly with a key), but did not look outside. He *"felt an overwhelming, nameless dread, as a child may for a coming nightmare."*

- Shortly after the carriage arrived, he heard shouting and the sounds of a struggle from Sommers' apartment below. Looking out, he saw the shadows cast by the wildly swinging light in Arthur's sitting room on the pavement outside; they revealed to him what he believes to have been Arthur and another man grappling desperately with three impossibly tall, long-fingered, sticklike figures. There was a howl of pain, a gunshot, then the sound of running down the stairs, followed by the front door banging open and footsteps running into the night.

- Silence followed and a few moments later Borelli looked on, *"paralysed in terror",* as the door was opened again and *"narrow men"* came out, two of them carrying what he believes was the slumped figure of Arthur Sommers between them (although he cannot be sure) to the waiting carriage. The third paused and turned to look at him in the window, after which he remembers only a glimpse of an *"unholy white face"* before fainting dead away in terror as *"its black soul clutched my heart".* When he came to his senses, he ran down-stairs and roused Mr and Mrs Giles, who had slept through it all, demanding that the police be called.

Borelli is hiding something (and doesn't do it very well), if the investigators determine this (either through clever questioning or Psychology rolls), they may take a harsher or persuasive tone with him. If pressed, Borelli comes clean and reveals that before waking the Giles's he entered Sommers' apartment through the open door, witnessed the scene inside and removed something from the room – a small battered medical bag, which he took on impulse, but has since become guilt ridden about. He is happy to let the investigators take it, saying it is *"an evil thing, owned I am sure by an evil man and I am happy to be rid of it."*

The Black Bag

The medical bag contains a number of old and miss-matched medical instruments including scalpels, forceps, and retractors, as well as a small supply of drugs (laudanum, ether and cocaine), a brass syringe (which still has traces of a cocaine solution inside), some bandages, needle and thread, cotton pads and the like.

Within the bag there is also a small dog-eared and blood-spotted notebook, in which are a variety of somewhat disturbing hand-drawn sketches and crabbed pencil notes in a mixture of English, Latin and Latvian. The contents of this journal are recognisable to anyone with the appropriate skills and knowledge as a mixture of occult formula and drawings (probably from life) of dissected female internal reproductive anatomy and aborted foetuses at various stages of development. Tucked into the back of the book are several loose leaves of scrap paper that contain lists of times and dates, some with initials and sums of money drawn up beside them.

In the bottom of the case are several old and greasy looking business cards labelled 'Josef Salt, M.D.', but the address on the backs of the cards, an office in Limehouse (from which Salt was evicted from some months ago), has been crossed-out in pencil. There is also a pawnshop ticket issued by an establishment called Purbrights Emporium for '*Brass Scientific Viewing Lens and Diverse Glass Slides; Tarnished and of the Second Quality: £1*'.

A Night at the Theatre

The investigators may wish to explore Sommers' recent connection to the Orpheum Theatre, the locus of his perceived slide into bad company. The investigators may receive this lead in several ways, most obviously from the theatre program found in Sommers' apartment, but also from conversation with other members of Arthur's social circle, plus from any attempts to track the past movements of Peter Blaylocke.

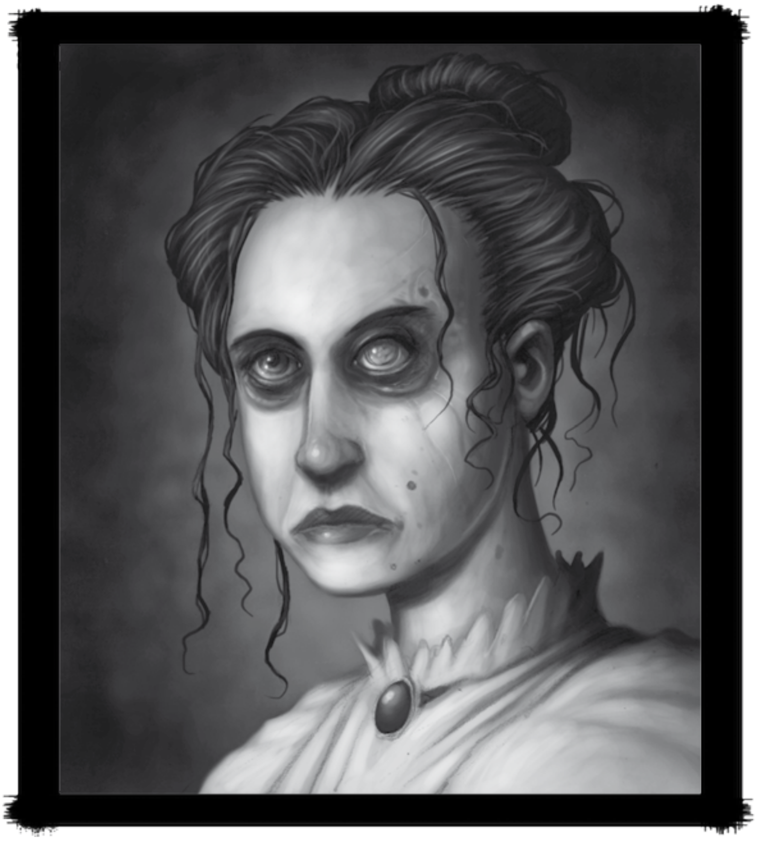
The Orpheum is an old theatre in London's West End with something of a reputation, at present, for being 'down at heel' and a trifle sordid. The theatre is often the home of productions that seek to bait the censor in order to stir-up news coverage and, thereby, drum up trade. The current offering, a hastily assembled revue entitled *The Gay Young Things,* is a frankly slip-shod affair, which is playing to half-empty houses. A disquieting and disturbed air pervades the place. Investigators who wish to learn more find the stage hands and players initially nervous and tight-lipped; a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll (or just good old fashioned bribery), soon has the gossip flowing, and all the talk is of the Orpheum's previous production, recently cancelled before its run could conclude.

An Ill-Favoured Production

Well-funded and (relatively) well-reviewed, *The Duchess of Malfi* offered the usual Jacobean mix of intrigue and slaughter, and the Orpheum's production placed the accent on the play's more licentious and gothic aspects. Despite being a success at the box office, the production was troubled from the start. Its producer (and principle financial backer) was an infamous rake and womaniser named Frederick Milton, whose fiery temper and dubious coterie of hangers-on frequently caused trouble. Shortly after the opening night, a visually striking woman began to attend the play almost every night. She was an eastern aristocrat going by the name of Madame Byragan, and she swiftly became the centre of decadent parties held at the theatre (and elsewhere), into which men and women seemed drawn in as by a whirlpool – Milton not least among them. As time went by, several members of the cast and crew soon became subject to mysterious accidents, and in two cases the unfortunates disappeared without trace. Matters came to a head shortly thereafter, (around three weeks previously), when Fredrick Milton committed suicide and the production was abruptly abandoned by the theatre's owners as police involvement and possible forced closure loomed.

Lily Foile

Another link to Arthur's fate is provided by one of Milton's former conquests, a young former-actress called Lily Foile, who also appeared in a minor role in the play. Lily was one of the two disappearances directly connected to the cast. Nearly two weeks ago, she was found wandering the streets with her clothes in disarray and her right hand mutilated. The other vanished player, a young actor named Edgar Dane, remains missing. Still in a state of profound shock and with little memory of what has befallen her, and with



nowhere else to go other than the sanatorium or the streets, the Orpheum's Stage Manger, a loudmouthed but basically good-hearted man named Augustus Phelps, has taken pity on Lily and given her a job helping out behind the scenes; sweeping up and assisting the wardrobe mistress as she can. Lily is a somewhat unreliable witness to Sommers' meeting with Madame Byragan (see following).

Although clearly a very pretty young woman, Lily has been reduced to a hollow, empty shell –the spark of life seemingly snuffed out. She is pale and haunted, yet quite lucid. Her blind left eye staring and immobile, she is quite disturbing to hold a conversation with; her mind wandering at times to dark places and events she cannot confront or begin to express.

Lily's Story

Lily remembers the past few months only vaguely and in snatches; she recalls attending several parties after the evening performances, although everything has become somewhat blurred in her mind. If prompted, she remembers meeting both Arthur (who she recalls as a *"charming young man, so bright... so bright... we were all so innocent"),* as well as Peter Blaylocke and *"Dear Max"*. Lily remembers all three courting *"a great lady",* but she does not offer Madame Byragan's name voluntarily and if it is mentioned she grows troubled and agitated – her mind suddenly blanks out. If drawn on the last thing that she can remember before her disappearance, she recalls going back to *"a fine house in the Strand, where something crawled"*, with others from the production. However, her memories twist from that point into an obscene, nightmarish tangle that she cannot unravel. The next thing she can remember is waking up several days later in her own bed at her lodgings, blind in one eye and missing two fingers on her right hand.

If the investigators can fully gain her confidence, she confides in them that she feels a "gnawing dread" that she will be drawn, against her will, to return to that house on the Strand. That, in fact, she is there in that very house now, trapped forever, and that 'this' is but a dream and she will awaken to find herself back there.

If the investigators take pains to find out who 'Max' is (possibly from others at the theatre, or any other sources they might have), the answer is the artist Bartholomew Maxwell. A noted artist of the macabre, whose work has been featured at the Royal Society. Maxwell was brought in on the production as art director to create the ("disturbing") painted curtain backdrops for the play. The man himself is remembered as an intense, brooding figure, although charming when he wished to be, and has not been seen or heard of since the play was closed; although, the stage manager has a forwarding address where he sent the artist's materials back via the post – a garret studio in Greenwich.

After talking to the investigators, at the Keeper's discretion, Lily may disappear again to be found meeting her end in the house on the Strand at the scenario's climax.

Optional Clues, Encounters and Events

In any good investigation-based adventure, 'many roads lead to Rome' so to speak, and Bad Company is no exception in that it does not hinge on any single vital clue, but rather a dark force moving through the lives of those close to the parties involved, which can be uncovered and explored in a wide number of in as many additional threads of plot as they wish, endeavouring to always elaborate on the results of the actions or lines of enquiry that the investigators choose to take.

With this in mind, the following section provides brief outlines for a number of different extra events and clues that the Keeper might wish to deliberately include or which could be adapted to the events in play.

Getting In With the Wrong Crowd

The investigators look into Arthur's 'new friends' and the dubious end of their social set. During the course of which, they may gather more rumours, identify victims and even link back (again) to Salt via this angle. If they succeed in finding the connection to Madame Byragan in this way, they may even encounter her or a debased member of her inner circle while doing so. This may well appeal to investigators with an interest in 'dark things' and may allow them (with sufficient bribery and gusto) to gain admittance to the house on the Strand, perhaps invited to one of the debauches carried out there regularly with whatever consequences the Keeper sees fit!

Death on the Second Floor

After talking to the investigators Borelli is brutally killed by the Straw Men, necessitating Inspector Bridger's further involvement in matters and closer co-operation with, or hard questioning of, the investigators and threatening to blow the lid on the scandal itself unless the investigators can act fortuitously. Alternately, Borelli sends a message for the investigators to come and see him again, believing himself to be watched and in mortal danger. They arrive just in time to witness him attacked and ripped apart by the Straw Men.

Red Herrings and Other Unwelcome Fish

Particularly cruel Keepers may wish to muddy this scenario's waters further by including a number of false leads – witnesses who swear that they have recently seen Arthur at other locations, false stories about his activities, misleading clues found at the scene and so forth. These false trails should be used sparingly as there are a great many real leads to follow in this scenario and the Keeper should take care that they do not entirely mislead their players or drown them in extraneous events and useless clues purely for the sake of adding 'mystery', as this will only ultimately detract from the fun of the game.

The Man from New Grubb Street

A hack journalist for a low quality paper is poking around into matters, having been tipped-off (either by one of the policemen called to the scene at Sommers' apartment, by Borelli himself or perhaps as a stalking horse for Abner Travisham). Obviously, it's in the best interest of the investigators either to shut him up or scare him off from the story. Of course, he might have clues or contacts that could be of use, or he could get himself into a great deal of trouble by not knowing what is really going on. This kind of character also makes for an excellent replacement should one of the investigators get themselves killed off during play.

The Perils of a Dark Beauty

The investigators may opt to put themselves into the same society as Arthur frequented, baiting a trap with their own necks. If they raise Madame Byragan's interest enough, she may display her power, arrogance and dark wit by inviting them all to a social event on 'neutral ground' that she plans to attend – such as a ball or theatrical reception – where she might indulge her amusement, subtly taunt or even openly challenge them, safe in the knowledge of the protection open society affords her in this situation. She may wish to enthral or mesmerise one or more of the investigators in order to set them against each other, or she may fancy one as a plaything.

The Desperate Blackmailer

If all else fails and the investigators are lost in knowing what to do, or have become badly sidetracked, have another desperate blackmail letter delivered to the Baronet laying out a place and a time for his agents to meet the increasingly terrified Salt in person. The investigators may conduct this meeting on the Baronet's behalf, only to find themselves attacked by the Straw Men.

From Russia with Hate

Rather than a potential minor encounter or line of enquiry, this optional plot thread substantially changes the potential course of the adventure by introducing another faction entirely to the mix, the Okhrana.

Over the last several years, 'Madame Onlenia Byragan' has left a trail of ruin across northern Europe – including destroying the sons of some of the most influential families in Tsarist Russia. Although she knows it not, in this option she herself is hunted by agents of the Russian Crown, who have marked her for death. The agency hunting her is the infamous Okhrana (more properly the 'Otdeleniye po Okhraneniyu Obshchestvennoy Bezopasnosti i Poryadka'), a covert Tsarist 'secret police' force that exist to enforce the will, security and the vengeance of the Tsarist state. The Okhrana (a late Victorian predecessor to the likes of the NKVD) is an agency not welcome, to say the least, in the British Empire. Its agents are forced to operate entirely in secret, manifesting themselves as a small assassination cell composed of a senior man (able to move in society and likely operating under a pseudonym), several home-grown hardened killers whose loyalty is unquestioned (likely these will either be Cossacks or the worst that the burgeoning St Petersburg underworld has to offer), and a local agent on the ground (with connection either by blood to Russia or heavily involved in the Baltic trade, for example). Their goal is to destroy Byragan. However, they know from past experience and possibly past causalities, having tracked her across the continent, this will be no easy feat. The team will only get a single chance to strike before she disappears again. There is a chance that they will know of the triptych (see The Gilded Triptych on page 38) and plan to destroy it, or at the very least find her lair and burn it down around her.

Keepers can utilise this rival faction in a number of ways, either to aid or hinder the investigators. They, too, could be tailing those who are caught in her web, hoping for an opening in which to attack, possibly accosting and interrogating the investigators to simply find out what they know, or just to get them out the way before their bumbling raises their quarry's alarm. This is, in fact, an excellent way to add a dose of action and physical danger to the scenario's investigative stages, if desired.

The Russian agents are also a great potential source of information on Byragan and her activities. It is up to the Keeper as to just how much they really know or suspect of her true nature. It is important to remember that the Russians are likely pious, god-fearing men bought up in the Russian Orthodox religion, which has remained largely unchanged in its dogma and outlook since the Middle Ages (at this point in time), and comes with its own retinue of demons and spirits of which Byragan forms a genuine part – whether they realise it or not.

The Russian agents can be extremely useful foils or serve as something of a 'double bluff' to conceal the existence of the Straw Men for some time. Intervention by the agents can also be used to 'save' investigators in trouble or, at least, provide some brief assistance or respite from attack, though this aid will come with strings attached at best.

When using this option it is, above all, important to remember that it should be the investigators who are central to solving this mystery and not the NPCs! So, while the Russian agents can offer assistance, hindrance or simply be an outright danger, they will not 'solve' the matter before the investigators do. Indeed, if they to strike at their quarry then they should be doomed to a horrific death for doing so – perhaps one of them just living long enough to pass on a nugget of information or a dire warning before finally keeling over!

Part 3: Paths to Darkness

This part of the adventure contains the two main paths by which the story's conclusion and the true author of Sommers' fate is revealed - the would-be blackmailer, Dr Joseph Salt, and the insane artist, Bartholomew Maxwell. Pursuing either one or both of these paths will lead almost directly to the entity posing as Madame Byragan and her house of horrors on the Strand.

The Addict and the Abortionist

By picking up the clues available and investigating the matter of the disappearance, the investigators will ultimately be lead to the blackmailers, Dr Josef Salt and his lackey, the addict Tomas Jakeswill. This part of the scenario deals with this two morally bankrupt individuals and the dark fate that awaits them. Jakeswill can be found at a run-down pawn shop at the edge of the Limehouse, called Purbrights (as mentioned in the blackmail note concealed in Arthur's book), and with the right pressure, or by simple bribery, he gives up his confederate's location in the dangerous slum area known as the Jago, where Salt is hiding out.

Jakeswill

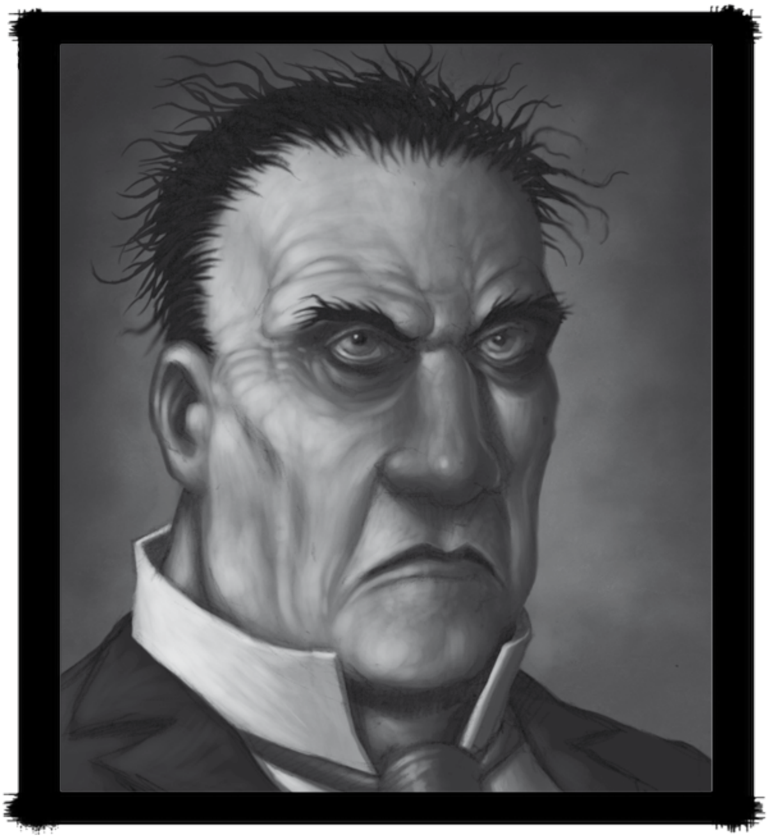
Tomas Jakeswill was once a respectable middle class man. A stable, dependable sort until the opium took its toll on him. Consequently, he has lost his wife, home and employment as a clerk, and is now reduced to working in a seedy pawnshop, called Purbrights, in Fallow Row. He sleeps in the backroom and ekes a pittance fencing low-end stolen goods. Clearly once a man of better means, he now looks like a refugee who has been forced to live too long in the same set of ragged clothes, while his skin has the sallow, sour look of an addict and the right lens of his round glasses is spider-webbed with cracks. In debt to Dr. Salt to feed his addiction, and fearful of his regular employer (who is a professional criminal), he is a fawning and weak willed man – it takes very little pressure to break him. Jakeswill knows where Salt is holed up and the bare bones of the blackmail plan, but nothing else.

Jakeswill is terrified by events and worried that he has become caught up in something that could well see him dangle at the end of a rope. He is particularly worried by the current state of Dr Salt and, although knows nothing of what happened to Arthur, he does have a good handle on who 'doctor' Salt is and how he operates, added to which he is sure that he is now being followed by something dreadful...

Dr Josef Salt

Josef Salt (just one in a long list of aliases), is a burley, heavy set man in his mid-forties with dark, furious and magnetic eyes and wiry black hair, who might be more easily mistaken for a blacksmith or butcher than a doctor. Anglo-Dutch by extraction, the man calling himself Josef Salt is extremely intelligent, though thoroughly immoral and undoubtedly insane. A sadist by inclination, who places no value on any life but that of his own, his actions in attempting to prove his own twisted medical theories have lost him his medical license and put a warrant on his head, forcing him into a series of pseudonyms and a life on the run.

Though he fancies himself a great man brought low by circumstances and the jealously of his peers, in truth his downfall has been through his own venial and vice-ridden lifestyle, and he has spent most of his life preying on the weaknesses of others in order to fund his own malign needs and 'work'. He has managed to accumulate a little occult lore over the years and he has absolute faith in the existence of the supernatural owing to experiences as a young man while serving a stint as a ship's doctor in the



Baltic Sea. Salt's current obsession is occult power and his own twisted take on eugenics – he even flatters himself that, with sufficient wealth, he could formulate a *"serum of eternal youth"* made from the recovered bodies of the unborn.

Salt's Activities

For the last decade, forced to assume a string of false identities to stay one step ahead of the law, he has earned his keep as a back-street abortionist in the East End and, more lately, as a procurer and blackmailer. Most recently, he attended on a fallen actress who had been made pregnant by one of Madame Byragan's circle. Intrigued by them, and the possibilities they offered for blackmail and entrapment, he believed that Byragan was simply a dangerous sybarite and murderess who drugged her victims to induce hallucinations and suborn them. From her followers (with whom he insinuated himself with ready gifts of drugs and worse), he discovered bizarre but consistent stories that Madame Byragan performed malign and obscene ceremonies before a gilded and bejewelled triptych that granted long life and the ability to endure fleshly torment in pursuit of obscene pleasures. Salt, on hearing these rumours, believed that he that he had literally struck gold, so to speak, in his own quest for power.

Not so foolish as to risk his own life, Salt settled for monitoring the comings and goings of Byragan and her circle as best as he was able, ultimately settling on her latest besotted 'love', Arthur Sommers, to act as his pawn. Salt's greed has proved his undoing, and Byragan far more dangerous than he had anticipated. The plan went disastrously wrong and the attack at Sommers' apartment left Salt nursing a serious wound to his left arm. Having seen her Straw Men and felt her power, Salt is in mortal terror of his life and soul, now believing that the woman is none other than the legendary Baba Yaga of eastern lore.

Now hunted by an evil far greater than he, Salt knows his only hope is to get enough money together to go as far away from England as possible. He dreams of starting a new life in the Americas, and has settled on blackmailing the Baronet as his last and best chance of doing so.

The Lodging House on Pennyforth Street

Salt has currently gone to ground in a dilapidated, rat-infested lodging house in Pennyforth Street at the edge of the Jago – one of the most infamous rookeries and slums of London - a place where no cabbie will go and where a street atlas is worse than unreliable. The lodging house is run by a bitter old harridan and her dull-witted, meat-slab of a son, who are both 'blind and deaf' with regards to their clientele – that is, of course, unless sufficient money changes hands. The lodging house, little more than three half-collapsed tenements with the partition walls knocked through, is rotten with damp and the only other tenants in residence are outcasts, petty criminals, addicts and rollers (street prostitutes who rob their victims).

Unless they take care to be incognito, the investigators will stand out markedly from the locals. If they appear naive they are likely to be in considerable danger of robbery, pick-pocketing and even murder, by simply being in the area. However, if they act with purpose and display the appearance of convincingly knowing what they are about, the locals will likely assume that they are *"the worst sort of toff"*, out for some dark amusement or the like, and consequently give them a wide birth – unless the investigators *insist* on causing trouble…

Confronting Salt

Salt is desperate, wounded and, above all, afraid. If cornered in his room and threatened with violence he will likely fight viciously and desperately like a cornered dog, rather than give up. If offered bribery (playing towards his dream of escape to America), he takes it and his price is money, morphine and, if possible, a steamer ticket and escorted passage to the docks. If so bribed, he happily divulges all that he knows (or at least thinks that he knows), about Arthur and the nightmare he has succumbed to in malign, gloating detail. He recounts his attempted blackmail and, most importantly, point to the house in the Strand as Arthur's likely location, *"where he no doubt wishes for death that will be long coming."*

If questioned about them he remembers Blaylocke only dimly as a *"loudmouthed fool"* and remembers Lily Foil not at all. He remembers the artist Maxwell well enough though, *"dangerous that one, marked by darkness, drank it in deep."*

Salt, though he holds no hope that the investigators can succeed against Byragan, urges them that their only hope now is to somehow defeat her or flee themselves, as they *"...are all held now in her evil eye."* He seeks to impress on the investigators that Byragan is not a woman, but a *"monstrous spirit... Baba Yaga... a fiend that cannot die!"* Warning them not to look her in her "*true face*".

In helping Salt, the investigators should be under no illusions that he is a vile piece of work, a murderer and, quite probably, far worse.

The Straw Men's Due

The investigators are likely (on coming to find Salt) to be followed by one of the Straw Men – particularly if they have forced Jakeswill to lead them here in person. If they spend more than half an hour at the lodging house, or they attempt to smuggle Salt to the docks, three Straw Men gather and attack with the purpose of capturing Salt in order to take him to their mistress. These inhuman creatures have no compunction of battering aside or killing any who stand in their way.

Any combat that follows should be swift and brutal, with screaming, confused bystanders and bloodletting aplenty. Investigators loitering in the aftermath of such an attack will likely land themselves in a great deal of trouble with the law, as well as drawing other unwelcome attention to themselves.

The Myth of Baba Yaga

Salt now believes Madame Byragan to be none other than Baba Yaga – an ancient, fickle and cannibalistic supernatural being common to the myths of many Eastern European peoples. Facts about this myth can be confirmed by investigators with the relevant Occult, History (East European) or cultural background skills. If a sufficiently learned investigator listens to Salt's theories on the matter, they realise that Salt has partly conflated Baba Yaga with other witch folklore and several other eastern mythical creatures (such as the malevolent Slavic 'curse spirit' Likho and the Russian myth of the Koschei – an undying king or sorcerer who can only be killed by destroying a particular sacred artefact). Salt, in his mind, has compounded aspects of each of theses myths into the entity masquerading as 'Madame Byragan' and he is, in fact, closer to the truth than he actually knows.

Salt is convinced that he stands no chance against her wrath and power in a direct confrontation – nor would any other mortal agency, believing that his only hope is to flee as far and fast as he may before she can enact her vengeance.

Painted Crimson and Gold

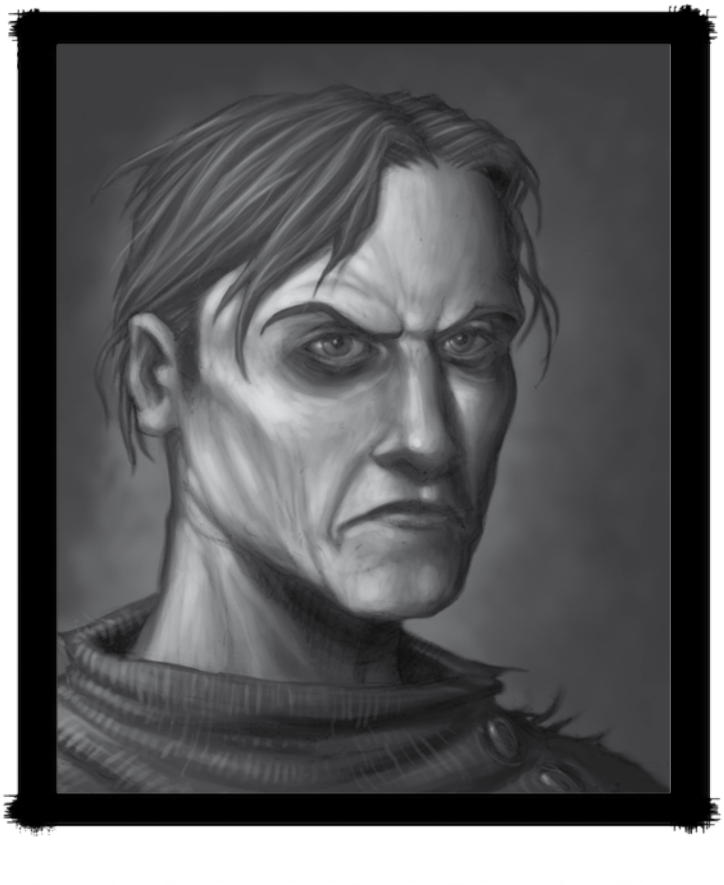
By a number of means, the artist Maxwell may have come to the investigator's attention, as he has links to both the ill-famed production of the *Duchess of Malfi* and has been seen in the company of Madame Byragan's coterie – he is a relatively recognisable person in London society. Not seen in public for more than a fortnight, Maxwell can, nevertheless be traced without much difficulty to his garret studio in Greenwich, an address that is held by both the Orpheum Theatre and several galleries that formerly sold his work. By going to see Maxwell, however, the investigators are walking directly into danger. The artist has been directly exposed to the truth of what Madame Byragan is and the worship of her dark god, Chernabog. The experience has shattered his sanity and blighted his soul. In a foreshadowing of events to come, bloody horror awaits within the artist's studio, as well as important clues that may ultimately aid the investigators in their final battle.

It is suggested that when the investigators arrive the studio is deserted and Maxwell is out –returning only when the investigators are deep into the horrors that they find in the studio, thus surprising them red-handed. Given Maxwell's murderous insanity, a fight will likely ensue which may well end in one or more deaths. This, along with the presence of a young woman's corpse, leaves the investigators in something of a quandary: whether to raise the alarm anonymously, go directly to the authorities and become embroiled in a murder investigation with no easy answers, flee the scene or attempt a more drastic cover up of what they have found.

Bartholomew 'Max' Maxwell

Pale, malnourished and gaunt, with burning bright eyes almost painful in their intensity, Maxwell has fallen into madness, consumed mind and soul by what he has seen and experienced at the hands of Byragan and her coterie. His fractured psyche has resorted to expressing itself in the only way it can, through his art, while the seed of murderous corruption that has blossomed within him has lead him to attempt to create his own copy of the Triptych and gain favour of the dark god, Chernabog, directly. Too far gone to save and guilty of terrible crimes, Maxwell belongs either permanently incarcerated in an asylum or hanging at the end of a rope.

If he can be questioned directly, particularly with the assistance of drugs or mesmerism, it becomes readily apparent that parts of his mind are warring against each other as he swings between regret, horror, malignant pride in his work and the unholy will to continue. Although far from lucid, the Keeper can feel free to drop in whatever clues they desire as to the truth of Madame Byragan, the Triptych and perhaps the location of the house on the Strand within Maxwell's delirious ravings.



The Artist's Studio

Maxwell's studio occupies the whole floor above an old disused farrier's yard in Greenwich, (he purchased the whole building on the proceeds of his Royal Society showing). The place has an air of neglect about it, and the wooded building has a tumbledown, half-rotted quality. It is obvious that no trade has been carried out in the farrier's yard for a year or more.

A rickety wooden staircase attached to the side of the building accesses the studio. The door to the studio is secured by a rusted mental hasp, now worn loose to the point where the nails holding it in place have come away and a Strength x 5 roll is enough to pick it from the hinges and open the door (this is how Maxwell gains entry). Even from the doorway, a strong smell of turpentine and something rotten is in evidence from within.

The studio itself is a large open plan room, with dirty exposed woodwork and a few grimy and cracked windows letting the light in, divided up by erratically placed drapes and hangings of soiled muslin. The room is a chaotic scatter of artist's materials, paints, easels, canvases, brushes, charcoals and sheaves of paper. Almost every wall and post is covered in a wild profusion of sketches and paintings, most half-finished, torn or cut. Buried under this artistic detritus are the fragments of Maxwell's life; an unkempt bed, scraps of food and cutlery, empty gin bottles, candle stubs, playbills, newspaper cuttings and discarded clothing. If a close search is made, some of the clothing is found to be belonging to women, much of it torn up and bloodstained.

Maxwell's Vision

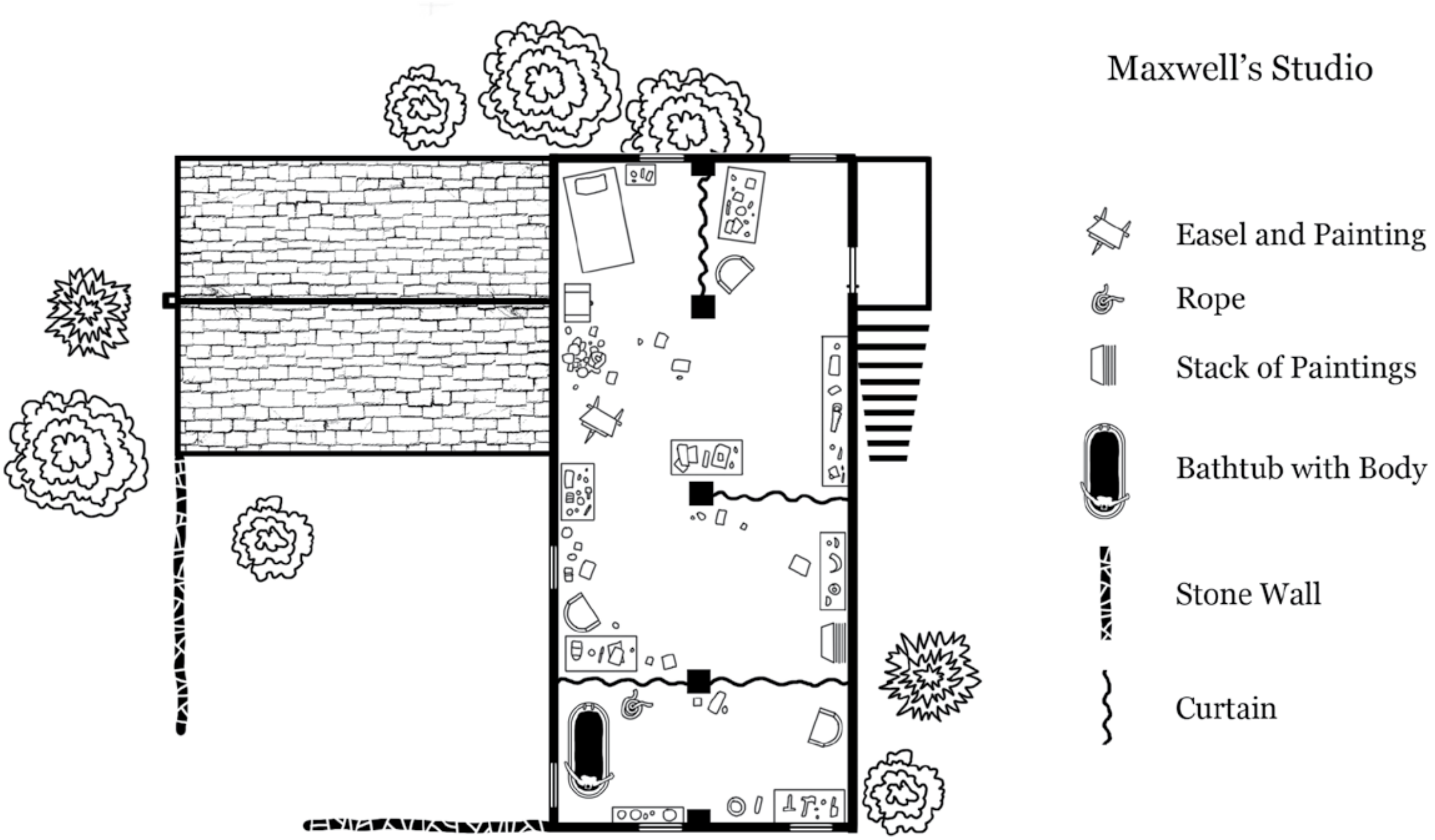
Once merely a skilled artist noted for his macabre vision and unfashionably gothic sensibilities, Maxwell's work, as evidenced around his studio, has plunged deep into the abyss of vice and visceral torment. Blazing forth from every canvas and sketch in black, vivid reds, deep rust and gold, are images of contorted depravity, horrific mutilation and torn flesh. Amid scores of works that have been half-finished or cast aside by their maker, are dozens of exquisite renderings of bodily destruction and immorality utterly shocking in their impact and realism to an extent that no Victorian sensibility could countenance.

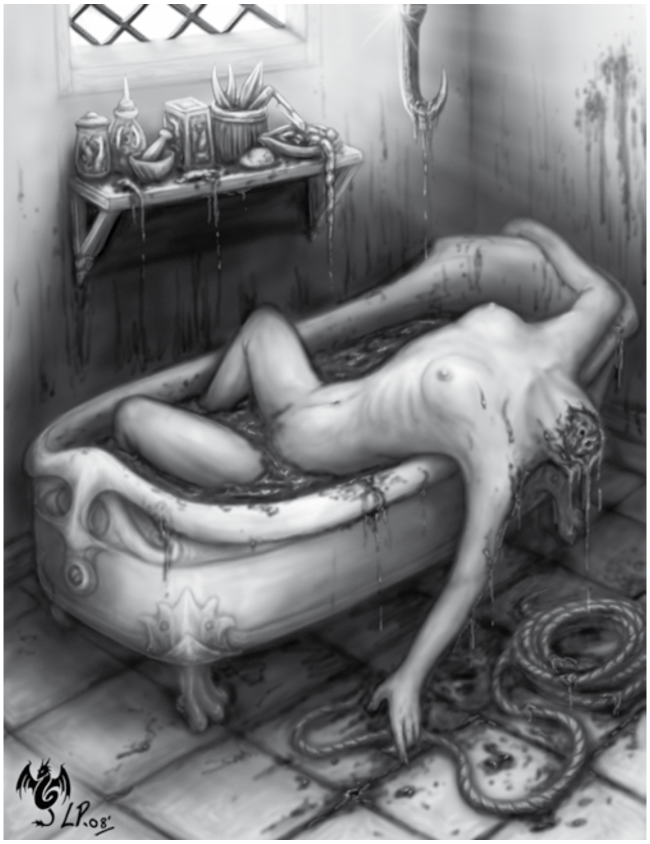
A detailed search of Maxwell's papers and the art adorning the walls calls for a Sanity Test for all but the most jaded investigator (0/1D4+1 loss, +1% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge if failed), as these are images that unnaturally haunt the mind and conceal some far more nightmarish reality beneath their surface. Such a study yields the realisation that certain images are repeated and expounded upon again and again. Laid out and displayed in sequences of three are images of headless yet mobile figures, orgiastic and murderous rites held beneath a shadowed threefold image or picture, and a beautiful woman's figure that shifts and blurs into a variety of horrific forms. Investigators who have met, or seen pictures of, those involved before, have a chance of recognizing several distorted faces as familiar in his works (Int x 4 roll is appropriate); namely Arthur Sommers, Peter Blaylocke, Lily Foile and the artist himself, as well as several other respected members of London society that they may peripherally recognise to their shock and disgust.

A search also reveals a torn sheaf of sketching paper with what amounts to a confession written on it (see **Player Handout 3**) – note that this is not actually concealed, but merely hidden by the scrabble of papers on his workbench and so no skill roll is required to locate it, just effort.

His Dark Materials

If the investigators stray toward the far end of Maxwell's studio they encounter a strong smell of turpentine overlaying something cloying and rotten. The smell originates from a series of closely hanging muslin drapes, closing off this section from the rest of the studio. The drapes appear to have been repeatedly soaked in the caustic spirit. Concealed behind is a scene of horror; the headless corpse of a young woman reclines indolently in a iron roll-top bathtub, half-filed with black, clotted and reeking blood (far more, and older, blood than could have come from this one body - which is no more than a few hours dead at the most). Above the bath is an iron hook imbedded in the ceiling and beside the bath is a coil of greasy rope. On a shelf, under a window behind the bath, are a variety of small jars and bottles containing





reddish-brown pigment and purifying chunks of flesh, along with a mortar and pestle, palette knives and a whetstone.

Experiencing this scene calls for a Sanity Test (0/1D6 loss).

Close examination of the woman's body reveals that gouging wounds have been dug into both of her palms and there are ligature marks around her ankles. The word 'Chernabog' has been carved carefully into her stomach. Autopsy further reveals that she was in her early twenties, her head had been removed with multiple hacking blows and she had been exsanguinated in the manner of a hanging animal carcass. There is no sign of her head.

Chernabog

An obscure deity of ancient Slavic myth, Chernabog (also Crnobog, Czernobóg and others), whose name literally means "the black god", is a being associated in regional legends and some northern occult texts with woeful misfortune, depraved excess and human sacrifice. The deity's worship was purged by force among the Russians and eastern Slavic kingdoms during the late medieval period. However, its name and some dim memory of this "enemy of God", and the terrors wrought by its worshipers, lingers to the current day as a devil of rural present folklore and a name by which men are cursed in those parts by those who dare to risk the anger of the mother Church.

The Mythos Connection

In this scenario, the author has equated the Chernabog myth and its prosecuted medieval cult to the Great Old One, Y'Golonac; itself a Mythos deity with connections to scattered cults of perversity and hungry for human sacrifice. If this scenario is being played with experienced investigators who already possess some degree of Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, viewing Maxwell's art may point in this direction as well, particularly if they have had exposure to either the Revelations of Glaaki or De Vermiis Mysteriis, both of which texts contain some mention of this entity and the depravity of its worshipers.

The Artist's Return

Once the investigators have had sufficient time to look around and perhaps make a few gruesome discoveries, or if they attempt to leave in a hurry, Maxwell should return, looking dishevelled and bringing with him a somewhat drunken young woman in tow, evidently a prostitute by her manner and dress. Unless the investigators can be very persuasive and very quickly convince him that they are somehow connected to Byragan's inner circle, Maxwell draws his cleaver and attacks, wailing like a dervish at their *"disturbance of his great work",* attempting to butcher them all without mercy. He stops only when killed or overcome. The prostitute screams at this turn of events and flees, unless detained.

Part 4: The House in the Strand

Ultimately, the uncovered mysteries surrounding Arthur Sommers' disappearance lead to Madame Byragan's house in the Strand. This may happen in a number of ways. Principally, either the investigators come to the conclusion that the missing man can be found here, or because simple self-preservation dictates the investigators find the source of the dark forces that are now stalking them.

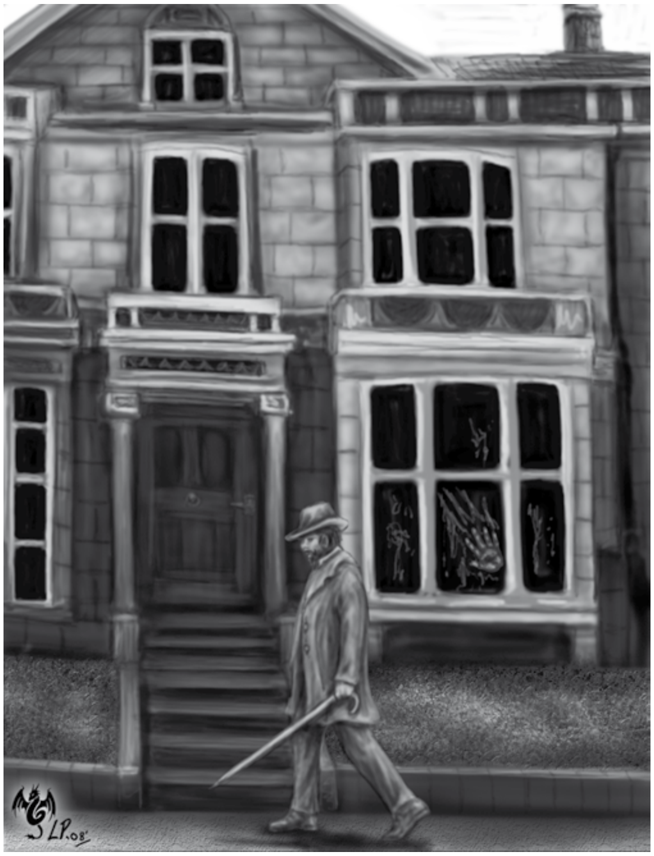
Madame Byragan is the spider at the centre of this web and reacts to intrusions into her domain accordingly. Investigators who come here by stealth or gain admittance to one of the debauches held here have the potential free rein of the house, right to the ladies chamber at the top of the house. However, if they barge in with violence or, worse yet, bring help (call the constabulary, etc.), the web twitches and the spider and all of her agents counter-attack, and things are not likely to go well for the investigators…

The full extent of the horrors and depravities that can be found at the house on the Strand is left up to the Keeper to decide, based on their own (and their player's) stomachs and taste for visceral horror, but the following sections contain pertinent details about the house's environs, layout and some suggested encounters the investigators might have there.

The House Itself

The house is a large, white plaster-over-brick, early Victorian detached townhouse of three stories, set within a small walled and fenced off garden. Unremarkable from the outside, set in a cul-de-sac of three other such houses in what is currently London's fashionable theatre and arts district.

In residence, the investigators find (unless she is out socialising or attending a party) Madame Byragan herself, attended by several of her Straw Men servants (three 'males' and two 'females') and, at any given time, a half dozen of her depraved and sycophantic inner circle, many of which are too heavily debauched, drugged or indolent to do anything, although some may be sadistic, insane and very dangerous if desired. Additionally, there are their victims, who number among them what's left of Arthur Sommers – just barely alive and conscious, driven out of his wits by the horrors that he has encountered. If he has been abducted, Dr Josef Salt can be found here as well as any other recent unfortunates (including hapless investigators), that have fallen foul of this toxic clique.

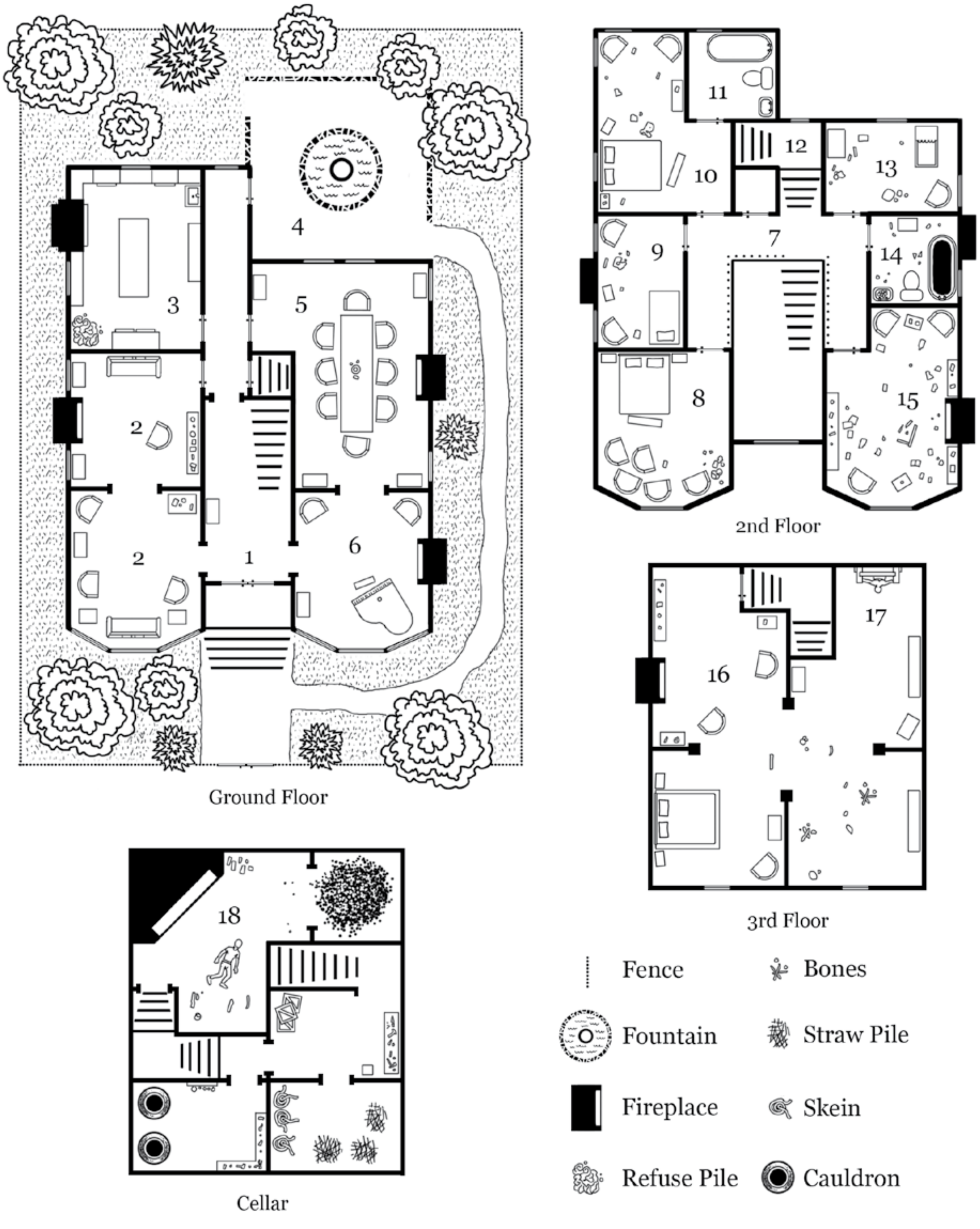


Gaining Entry: The doors of the house in the Strand are open at all times and may be freely entered into. Getting out again may well be a different matter. If knocked, a silent, emotionless young maid answers the front door. Although an illusion makes her seem more or less normal, she too is a straw construct and may not talk, although 'she' understands perfectly well and can act accordingly. A servant of the house, she defends herself if attacked but will not initiate violence or impede the investigators unless willed to by her mistress.

Layout

The Ground Floor Salons: The ground floor contains a series of reception rooms, salons, music rooms and a large dining room; all over-furnished and decorated in extravagant reds and purples, with heavy black velvet curtains. These rooms are also appointed with a somewhat schizophrenic taste in statuary, objets d'art and pictures depicting subjects that range from orgiastic or hellish scenes from classical literature to north Eastern European scenes and historical portraiture. Beneath the opulence, however, things do not sit right here. The place has a sinister, off-centre feel to it. The pictures seem to leer and brood. The furnishings are chipped and

The House in the Strand


1
2
2
3
4
5
6
Ground Floor
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
2nd Floor
16
17
3rd Floor
18
Cellar
Fence
Bones
Fountain
Straw Pile
Fireplace
Skein
Refuse Pile
Cauldron

1. Foyer
2. Sitting Room
3. Kitchen
4. Patio
5. Dining Room
6. Music Room
7. Upstairs Balcony
8. Bedroom
9. Bedroom
10. Bedroom
11. Bathroom
12. Stairs to 3rd Floor
13. Nursery
14. Bathroom
15. Library
16. The Lady's Chambers
17. Arthur Sommers
18. Incinerator & Coal Room

stained on close inspection. The light poor and the air eternally smoky with the scent of perfume and underlying rot.

The Kitchens: The kitchens are large and clearly used to dealing with the parties and feasts held here. It holds no sinister secrets other than the vast stores of rotten food, spoiled wine and piles of spoiled and flyblown sheets piled haphazardly in one corner.

The Cellars: The cellars are used to hold the remains of Madame Byragan's victims until they can be properly disposed of; there are also numerous shackles and heavy tools, a separate coal cellar, an incinerator, cauldrons of boiling fat, skeins, straw and ritual gear. It is here that the Straw Men silently reside when not needed.

The First and Second Floors: The first floor is made up of guest bedrooms, bathrooms, closets and an old nursery. Most of these rooms are decorated much as the salons downstairs, with hints of something really quite wrong underlying the appearance of normality – such as fingernail scratches on parts of the skirting boards. Several rooms have a disused look and contain older stacked furniture, as well as nick-knacks, piles of old clothes and children's toys – what is left from the previous occupant's belongings scattered haphazardly. One room is a smashed, soiled and torn up library, which features occult books and even shreds of Mythos related papers (Keepers discretion). Another room is a bathroom, which looks as if it has been used as an abattoir, with a number of broken dolls heads floating in a filth-choked washing bowl underneath a shattered mirror, whilst a blood-filled bath with glass-shards floating in it, sits next to the wall.

A Rapping on the Stairs: As they ascend the stairs to the second floor, the investigators hear a repeated, frantic rapping sound. Cautiously poking a head above the level of the next floor reveals the heel of a woman's boot sticking out from a nearby doorway, spasmodically kicking against the wooden floorboards. The woman should be somebody the investigators have questioned during the course of their inquiries, such as an actress, society belle or even a servant girl. The woman has had her hands sown to her mouth with cat gut and is out of her wits with fear, but otherwise unharmed. Other than a terrifying memory of turning around to find herself surrounded by the Straw Men, she recalls nothing.

The Lady's Chambers: The upper-most floor is the domain of Madame Byragan herself, a veritable garden of morbid delights and fleshly horrors, masked when she wishes it in veils of illusion to conceal its true nature. Keepers should secretly roll POW x 1 rolls for each investigator, those succeeding are able to perceive the true horrors of this room, unmasking the illusion of Byragan (if she is present and casting an illusionary web).

Dominating the master bedroom is a great divan bed, strewn with ragged furs, still-bloodied pelts and flayed skins, while trinkets and jewels given to her by her enthralled victims lie forgotten in piles amid litters of gnawed bones about the floor. Above the bed is a strangely beautiful and utterly beguiling triptych made from gilded wood and inlaid with precious stones. The artistry of its painted panels, depicting a maiden on the left, mother on the right, and in the centre a crone, is utterly exquisite and conceals many secrets.

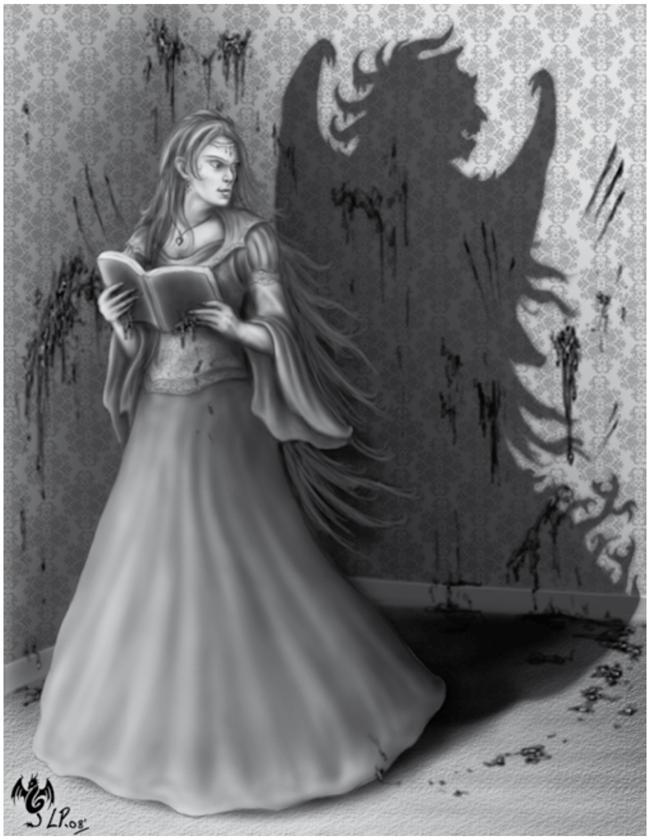
Bound to an iron and wood frame in an alcove at the side of the room is what remains of Arthur Sommers. At the Keeper's discretion, he is alive and 'salvageable', though likely not intact in body or mind. Seeing him and the contents of the room calls for a Sanity Test (1/1D8 loss).

Unless attending to business elsewhere or attending a soiree, Madame Byragan can be found here as well.

The Conclusion of Events

There is no set 'right or wrong' way to end this scenario and the investigators may reach the house on the Strand with different goals to accomplish or different levels of knowledge about just what is going on (or just how much danger they are in). It is left up to the good sense of the Keeper to handle matters, and run either a desperate infiltration of the house or a deadly final confrontation with Byragan, as is needed.

Direct frontal assault is likely to end one way – badly. Hopefully, the investigators will have more sense than to try this option. Approaches via stealth or by covert means are more likely to succeed and, here, Byragan's innate arrogance is likely to come to the investigators' aid. With luck, skill and a little forward planning, it is quite possible that they can triumph over her. Either stealing away Sommers from under her grasp or destroying the Triptych, and thereby ending the deathless ravages of Byragan and her depraved followers in a single stroke. Particularly savvy investigators may arrange to have the help of extra forces in the final act, try to burn the house as they flee or even arrange their attack for when



Byragan is away (perhaps the most sensible plan of all), and the Keeper should award such cunning where appropriate.

Regardless of the outcome, the investigators' actions and achievements (or lack of them), should determine what happens in the aftermath. Here are a few examples:

If the Triptych is Destroyed

Byragan and her inner circle are abruptly and spectacularly destroyed. The investigators have succeeded in removing a great evil from their world and saving countless future lives. They should receive 1D10+2 Sanity for doing so.

If they also manage to restore Godfrey Sommers' son to him, he ensures that they are paid their due. The Baronet also sets them up with various investments and introductions in gratitude – increase Credit Ratings by +1D10%. Godfrey Sommers then retires from public life to spend his remaining years caring for the shattered wreck of his son.

Depending on how publicly the matter was handled, the investigators may merit Bridger, the Baronet and others, now as contacts to be called upon in future adventures. However, if things have otherwise gone badly and any word of the 'scandal' reached the gutters of Fleet Street, the investigators become social pariahs, forevermore dogged by rumours of dark scandal and strange goings on – itself, perhaps, a magnet for further adventures yet to come.

If Sommers is Rescued but the Triptych is Not Destroyed

Getting Arthur out and into his father's hands is worth 1D6 Sanity each. The Baronet, while appalled with his son's fate and incredulous of the story behind it, is a man of his word and pays them what he owes them. Shortly afterward he calls in Special Branch, who raid the house on the Strand one night – the investigators read of a deadly fire that burned through the house in the morning papers the following day, along with a small column item in the political section about the retirement of Baronet Godfrey Sommers from public life.

Some time later a package arrives in the mail for one of the investigators, post-marked from New York. Inside the package is the flayed, pressed-flat face of Dr Josef Salt, set in a soundless scream.

Failure to do Either

Each person concerned with the matter sooner or later disappears, or dies suddenly and violently. One by one, the investigators find themselves bound up beneath the gilded triptych awaiting the Madame Byragan's pleasure…

Suggested Reading

***The Novel of the White Powder*, By Arthur Machen 1895.**

***The Picture of Dorian Grey,* By Oscar Wilde, 1891.**

***Bleak House*, By Charles Dickens, 1853.**

***A Child of the Jago*, By Arthur Morrison, 1902.**

***Life in Darkest London*, By the Revd. A O Jay, 1891.**

***Studies in Witchcraft*, By Montague Summers, 1926.**

***The Bath House at Midnight: Magic in Russia*, By W F Ryan, 1999.**

Protagonists & Villains

Principle NPCs

Baronet Godfrey Sommers

Peer of the Realm

STR 11 DEX 12 INT 15 CON 11
SIZ 15A PP 12 POW 13 EDU 18
SAN 60 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 54%, Boating 34%, Credit Rating 78%, Fast Talk 32%, Geology 20%, History 41%, Law 55%, Other Language (Afrikaans 27%, French 50%, German 37%, Latin 22%), Persuade 46%, Pilot Boat 37%, Psychology 42%, Ride 28%, Shotgun 53%, Spot Hidden 42%.

Mr Clarence

Faithful Solicitor & Agent

STR 09 DEX 13 INT 16 CON 11
SIZ 11 APP 10 POW 10 EDU 17
SAN 50 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Accounting 60%, Bargain 46%, Credit Rating 30%, Fast Talk 25%, History 22%, Listen 39%, Other Language (Latin 45%), Persuade 41%, Psychology 26%, Sneak 21%.

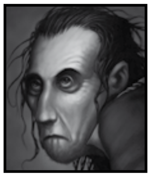
Inspector Harry Bridger

Troubled Policeman

STR 13 DEX 15 INT 14 CON 13
SIZ 13 APP 11 POW 14 EDU 14
SAN 70 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 20%, Dodge 40%, Drive Carriage 36%, Fast Talk 41%, Law 60%, Oratory 27%, Language -Dutch 22%, -Yiddish 13%, -Cantonese 12%, Listen 32%, Sneak 35%, Persuade 38%, Psychology 38%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 28%, Underworld 43%.

Weapons: Fist 71% (1D3+1D4), Grapple 40%, Truncheon 46% (1D6+1D4) or Lematt Revolver 43% (1D10+1).

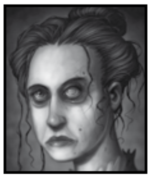


Marcus Borelli

Tormented Musician

STR 09 DEX 16 INT 13 CON 08
SIZ 12 APP 10 POW 15 EDU 14
SAN 38 Hit Points: 10
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Art (Violin 87%, Pianoforte 40%, Composition 34%), Credit Rating 23%, Fast Talk 38%, Hide 16%, History 27%, Listen 47%, Occult 20%, Other Language (English 56%, French 30%), Own Language (Italian 70%), Persuade 19%, Psychology 15%, Ride 31%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 27%.



Lily Foile

Mutilated Actress

STR 10 DEX 13 INT 12 CON 10
SIZ 11 APP 09 (14) POW 12 EDU 11
SAN 26* Hit Points: 10
Damage Bonus: none

** Note that thanks to her recent experiences, Lily is in a permanently disassociate state.*

Skills: Lily is currently incapable of any skill use above the base level.

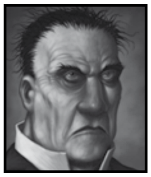
Tomas Jakeswill

Drug-addled Go-between

STR 11 DEX 10 INT 12 CON 11
SIZ 13 APP 11 POW 11 EDU 13
SAN 38 Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Accounting 20%, Bargain 20%, Credit Rating 04%, Dodge 21%, Drive Carriage 28%, Fast Talk 36%, Law 20%, Library Use 20%, Locksmith 34%, Persuade 18%, Pharmacy 20%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 29%.

Weapons: Lock Knife 25% (1D6).



Dr Josef Salt

Blackmailer, Madman
and Would-Be Sorcerer

STR 15 DEX 13 INT 15 CON 13
SIZ 14 APP 13 POW 13 EDU 15
SAN 0* Hit Points: 08 (when encountered)
Damage Bonus: +1D4

** Salt is Indefinitely Insane – an egomaniacal sociopath and sadist with numerous delusions, but nonetheless he is very cunning and outwardly rational and controlled.*

Skills: Art (Drawing/Sketching 40%), Bargain 38%, Biology 43%, Chemistry 32%, Cthulhu Mythos 07%, Dodge 30%, Drive Carriage 36%, Fast Talk 49%, First Aid 56%, History 36%, Occult 52%, Law 20%, Library Use 45%, Listen 38%, Medicine 58%, Mesmerism 36%, Other Language (Dutch 65%, German 55%, Russian 46%, Swedish 38%, Latvian 31%, Latin 30%, Greek 20%), Persuade 43%, Pharmacy 50%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 32%, Spot Hidden 33%, Surgery 37%.

Weapons: Surgical Blade 60% (2D3+1D4), Grapple 42%, Single-Shot Pistol 36% (1D10).

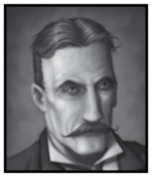
Arthur Sommers

Lost Son

STR 06 (12) DEX 08 (12) INT 09 (13) CON 06 (14)
SIZ 13 APP 09 (14) POW 11 EDU 13
SAN 13 Hit Points: 03 (as encountered)
Damage Bonus: none

Arthur's current attributes reflect his damaged body and mind when his is encountered; the numbers in parenthesis indicate their normal levels. He is in the processes of being tortured and driven mad for the pleasure of his captors. Driven to the very brink, he is at times hysterical, delusional and painfully lucid.

Skills: Currently incapable of any skill use beyond the base level.



Abner Travisham

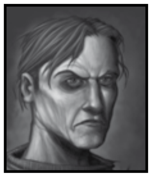
London Society Potentate
and Scandal-Monger

STR 10 DEX 11 INT 16 CON 10
SIZ 14 APP 13 POW 13 EDU 17
SAN 63 Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Art (Dance 42%, Fine 40%, Poetry 38%), Bargain 53%, Credit Rating 80%, Drive Carriage 30%, History 33%, Law 35%, Library Use 40%, Listen 40%, Fast Talk 55%, Other Language (French 60%, Italian 38%, Spanish 33%), Persuade 56%, Psychology 45%, Ride 30%, Sneak 33%, Spot Hidden 35%.

Weapons: Derringer 30% (1D8).

The Malign Forces



Bartholomew 'Max' Maxwell

Murderous Artist of
the Macabre

STR 14 DEX 14 INT 14 CON 13
SIZ 13 APP 12 POW 15 EDU 16
SAN 0* Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

** Maxwell has been driven mad and is slowly descending into bodily corruption.*

Skills: Art (Fine 72%, History 45%), Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Dodge 32%, Drive Carriage 30%, Library Use 35%, Fast Talk 37%, Occult 40%, Other Language (French 46%, Latin 27%), Persuade 22%, Sneak 35%.

Weapons: Meat Cleaver 42% (1D6+1+1D4), Fist 50% (1D4+1D4), Grapple 33%.

The Touch of Chernabog: Thanks to the slow intrusion of the foul entity Chernabog into his being, and the madness that has inured him to pain, he can heal injury at a startling rate, recovering 1 lost HP every ten minutes – although he will be left monstrously hungry for meat. Thus, he is quite hard to kill, needing to be reduced to –10 HP or suffer some fate such as burning alive or decapitation, to finally put him down.

The Straw Men

Animated Servants of Evil

STR 15	DEX 15	INT 10	CON 20
SIZ 14	APP -	POW 10	
Hit Points: 17		Damage Bonus: +1D4	

Skills: Climb 80%, Drive Carriage 40%, Hide 80%, Listen 60%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Attack: Hooked Blade 50% (1D6+1D4), Grapple 60%.

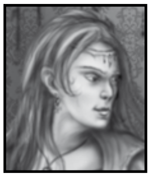
SAN Loss: 1/1D6

Unbarred Passage: At the straw servant's touch, locks unfasten, doors unbar and knots unfurl. They may not, however, cross running water except by means of a bridge, and if immersed in running water they unravel to nothingness.

Created of the Black Arts: Byragan's faithful servants are animate but unliving things: stitched together contrivances of straw, boiled fat, dead leaves, tears, chicken bones and old rags. Brought to life by ancient and dark forces, they are boneless, fleshless, lithe and hard to destroy. These abhorrent and murderous creatures are possessed of a malevolent and alien intelligence and can act with inhuman patience once set to a task.

They suffer full damage from slashing weapons, double damage from fire, but minimum damage from all other sources, such as bullets and impacts. They have no need to breathe, eat, sleep etc., and see perfectly well even in total darkness.

Mask of Shadows: Unless they attack or perform some blatantly unnatural act, the straw servants remain as dim, disturbing but strangely forgettable figures that blur in the memory. The eyes of observers seem to slide off them, only registering the barest details of their presence – unless the viewer can succeed in a POW x 2 roll while looking directly at them. If the roll is passed or should they break their protective illusionary cover, then they are revealed for the unnatural things they truly are – the potential SAN Loss for seeing them applies.



The 'Madame Onlenia Byragan'

Depraved Immortal Being, Beloved of Chernabog

STR 20	DEX 15	INT 20	CON 30
SIZ 14	APP 16/-	POW 25	
Hit Points: 22		Damage Bonus: +1D6	

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 70%, Fast Talk 80%, Other Languages (Any Needed 80%), Persuade 80%, Psychology 60%, any other sphere of knowledge as needed at 40%.

Weapons: Claws & Teeth 60% (1D6+1D6) or Bloody Gaze 60% (treat as a weapon usable on any living creature she can see – victims must resist her POW or suffer 1D10 damage as their blood vessels rupture).

Spells: Animate Straw Man, Call Chernabog (Y'Golonac), Death Curse, Enthrall Victim, Mental Suggestion, Power Drain, Send Dreams, Summon/ Bind Dimensional Shambler, and any other the Keeper deems appropriate.

SAN Loss: 0 (Revealed 1D3/1D8)

Undying: All weapons inflict minimum damage and she cannot die by normal means, merely becoming stunned if reduced to '0' HP or less, and while the triptych survives she recovers 1D3 lost HP each round, and may even restore herself to life (eventually) if dismembered or burned to ash. As the triptych is harmed she is harmed, and she is destroyed as it is destroyed.

Dark Glamour: She may appear as a beautiful woman as long as she wills it, affecting the look of an ageless but jaded glamour. The psychically sensitive may notice something terribly but indefinably 'wrong' about her (a POW x 1 roll) and likewise many animals react in fear, otherwise her illusion is impenetrable to mortal eyes and remains in effect as long as she wishes it. Her natural form is a foul and terrible thing: that of a horrific near-skeletal hag, her diseased flesh is naked and splattered with blood and offal, while her hands terminate in wickedly-hooked talons and row after row of needle teeth line her distended jaws. Her eyes are her most dreadful feature – empty and endlessly bleeding pits.

The Spider in the Web: A creature of vast occult power, her dark arts have animated the straw servants to do her bidding and she controls them at will by mental command, over any distance and can see and hear through them as she wishes. If she is destroyed they, too, are destroyed, collapsing to rot and befouled straw.

The Gilded Triptych

The Gilded Triptych is a darkly powerful occult artefact, hints and rumours of which can be found in numerous apocryphal sources down the years as a thing linked to the worst forms of depraved excess and immorality. First created by a corrupted priest, during the chaos of the succession wars in the Duchy of Muscovy in the early years of the fifteenth century, it is both an exquisite and supremely valuable, if somewhat anomalous, work of art. It is wholly evil.

Fashioned in a deliberate mockery of the icons of the Eastern Orthodox religion, contained within the triptych's richly ornamented structure are fragments of a number of older, pre-Christian artefacts gathered by the priest's master (a dissolute and murderous prince) - fragments bartered and stolen from across the northern lands and paid for in blood and flesh. The prince and his court conducted depraved and unspeakable rites before the triptych in worship of the black god, Chernabog, a being known in some obscure texts as Y'Golonac, the hungering one. The prince and his court sought out the power of this obscene deity in the hope of securing its favour and the blessings of everlasting physical life – all the better to enjoy the twisted pleasures of the flesh. In time, the rumoured enormities of the nameless prince and his sect grew too vile for his warlike neighbours to stomach, and both he and his followers were put to the sword and their domains consigned to the fire by the forces of the nobility and mother church. But the story persists among occultists, and those concerned with acquiring rare and forbidden things, that the Triptych itself survived and passed secretly from one hand to another ever since.

It is not known whether the entity currently masquerading as Madam Byragan is truly the entity depicted on its panels. Whether she is some form of avatar or servant-creature of Chernabog, a abominable hybrid-thing birthed from the god's dark revels, or a depraved worshiper granted her hearts desire in a truly horrific manner by her foul deity. Regardless of the truth, her powers and fate are inextricably bound to the Gilded Triptych, so long as it survives, she is effectively immortal. However, to remain so, she must regularly conduct rituals of horrific torture and betrayal before its graven images.

Destroying the Triptych

As an object, the triptych, while very sturdy, is still made from mortal materials with 2 Armour Points and 20 Hit Points. It can be smashed, burned or broken by normal means. Impaling weapons. however, only do minimum damage, owing to its solid construction. As it is harmed, a like amount of damage also appears on the flesh of Madame Byragan (also ending any illusion she is casting), and also on the flesh of the members of her inner circle (if it is slashed, they are slashed; if it is burned they are burned, etc.) – this damage may not be healed in any way.

A Sample of Byragan's Sybarites

Dissolute and Depraved Cultists

STR 13 DEX 12 INT 12 CON 15
SIZ 13 APP 12 POW 13 EDU 14
SAN 0 Hit Points: 14
Magic Points: 13 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Dodge 30%, Drive Carriage 30%, Fast talk 37%, Occult 30%, Persuade 25%, Pharmacy 40%, Psychology 25%, also either Art, Credit Rating or Disguise at 35%.

Weapons: Razor 40% (1D4+1D4), Grapple 30%.

Spells: Mental Suggestion.

Cultist of the Inner Circle: Byragan has an inner circle comprising of a handful of dissolute devotees to her vile worship, who treat her as a living goddess and partake of her debased sacraments and her dark blessing. Sooner or later these sycophants bore her and become playthings in their own right. Such devotees have been marked in rituals before the triptych. All are insane and, thanks to their pact with darkness, can regenerate 1 lost HP a round until death or unless decapitated, crushed, incinerated or other such messy fate befalls them.

Unlike their otherworldly mistress, they are not immortal. They are supremely corrupt, utterly arrogant and debauched, considering others as mere playthings. If the Triptych is destroyed, the effects of any past injury or depravity they have visited on themselves quickly re-manifest with appalling and deadly results!

Useful Generica

Upper Class Rake

STR 12 DEX 13 INT 11 CON 13
SIZ 12 APP 13 POW 12 EDU 13
SAN 50 Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Art 20%, Credit Rating 40%, Dodge 30%, Drive Carriage 30%, Fast Talk 30%, Other Language (French 30%), Persuade 30%, Psychology 20%, Ride 40%.

Weapons: Fist 50% (1D3), Straight-Stick 40% (1D6) or Pocket Revolver 30% (1D8).

Dockside/Slum Thug

STR 16 DEX 10 INT 10 CON 14
SIZ 14 APP 09 POW 09 EDU 06
SAN 45 Hit Points: 15
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Dodge 20%, Drive Carriage 20%, Fast Talk 25%, Underworld 30%, Law 15%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 30%, Track 20%.

Weapons: Punch 65% (1D3+1D4), Knife 35% (1D4+1D4), Grapple 40%, Brass Knuckles 65% (1D4+1+1D4) or Iron Cudgel 50% (1D10+1D4).

Streetwalker

STR 10 DEX 13 INT 09 CON 11
SIZ 10 APP 11 POW 11 EDU 08
SAN 50 Hit Points: 10
Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Conceal 30%, Disguise 15%, Dodge 35%, Hide 35%, Fast Talk 40%, Law 15%, Listen 30%, Spot Hidden 30%, Persuade 20%, Psychology 25%.

Weapons: Concealed Blade 40% (1D4).

Cthulhu Britannica

Darkness, Descending

A 1930s Call of Cthulhu Scenario, by Mike Mason

Wherein the investigators delve through the dirt of ages past to reveal forgotten relics better left unearthed.

Introduction

Darkness, Descending is set in 1930s England and takes place in and around the tiny village of Middle Harling, which sits just east of the Thetford Forest in the county of Norfolk.

Middle Harling is a quintessential sleepy English village where nothing important really ever happens. However, archaeological discoveries in the vicinity of Soldier's Wood, three miles south of Middle Harling, have brought a small team of archaeologists to explore the area and unearth what appears to be a small Roman settlement.

A small advance party of archaeologists have been at the excavation site, camped in Soldier's Wood, for three weeks prior to the investigators arrival. Both the investigators and the advance party are all from Cambridge University and all are naturally excited by thought of what they might unearth from England's ancient past.

The scenario begins on Friday 21st September 1934 – three days before the Autumnal Equinox.

Darkness, Descending is primarily designed to be a one-shot adventure, played over the course of one to three gaming sessions. However, suggestions have been provided for Keepers wishing to use the scenario as the starting point to a new campaign. Keepers should be cautioned however, as the consequences of failure could well be dire for both the investigators and the populace of Middle Harling.

The scenario is intended for use with four to six, primarily middle or upper class, characters as investigators, and six pre-generated characters have been included for this purpose at the end of the scenario (see **Appendix I.II**). However, ***Darkness, Descending*** can be played with Classic era investigators of your own design or as part of an ongoing campaign with a little modification. The key requirement for existing player characters would be that they are archaeologists or that they have skills and experience that could reasonably be called upon at an archaeological dig.

Darkness, Descending is predominantly inspired by the Eddy C. Bertin story *Darkness, My Name Is*. Keepers are encouraged to read the story, which can be found in *The Disciples of Cthulhu*, edited by Edward P. Berglund.

Keeper's Information

Soldier's Wood hides a terrible secret. Beneath the wood lies an ancient temple to the Great Old One, Cyaegha. The temple co-exists between our world and another dimension – a dimension comprised of nothing but 'dark matter'. In aeons past, Cyaegha was imprisoned within the dark dimension causing a rift in the folds of space, destroying the physical reality of the monstrosity's temples on Earth. Since this time the rift has been slowly healing and the connection with our world growing stronger, allowing the dark god tantalizing glimpses of its former residences here on Earth. The dimensional connection is at its strongest at the temple under Soldier's Wood; however, a further, weaker, connection does exit at another location, namely the small town of Freihausgarten in Germany. Cyaegha senses that its freedom could be at hand (or tentacle) and has begun to focus its malignant present at its former temple under Soldier's Wood, aiming to displace or break the wards and barriers set by the Elder Gods long ago.

Since ancient times, a small but insidious cult of Cyaegha worshippers has existed in the area. The cult would hold rites at the site of the buried temple on the Autumnal Equinox (24th September in the year 1934). During the rites, the cultists would call upon the essence of Great Cyaegha, drawing out the creature's power and vitality as he momentarily manifested himself.

To ensure that Cyaegha did not break its bonds and escape on these occasions, the cultists bound five guardian spirits, housed in statuettes, known as Vaeyen. The Vaeyen acted to not only guard the site, but also as Cyaegha's gaolers, preventing the Great Old One from fully materialising.

The cult died out during the infamous witch hunts of the 1600s, when its brethren either escaped to new lands or were accused of black magic and burnt alive at the hands of Matthew Hopkins, Witchfinder General, and his ilk.

As the dimensional rift slowly heals, Cyaegha's power grows stronger, enabling it to exert dark influence upon the site and, importantly, the Vaeyen – forcing the statuettes to rise to the surface in the hope that some unsuspecting creature would find them and remove them from the site, thus paving the way for the creature's return.

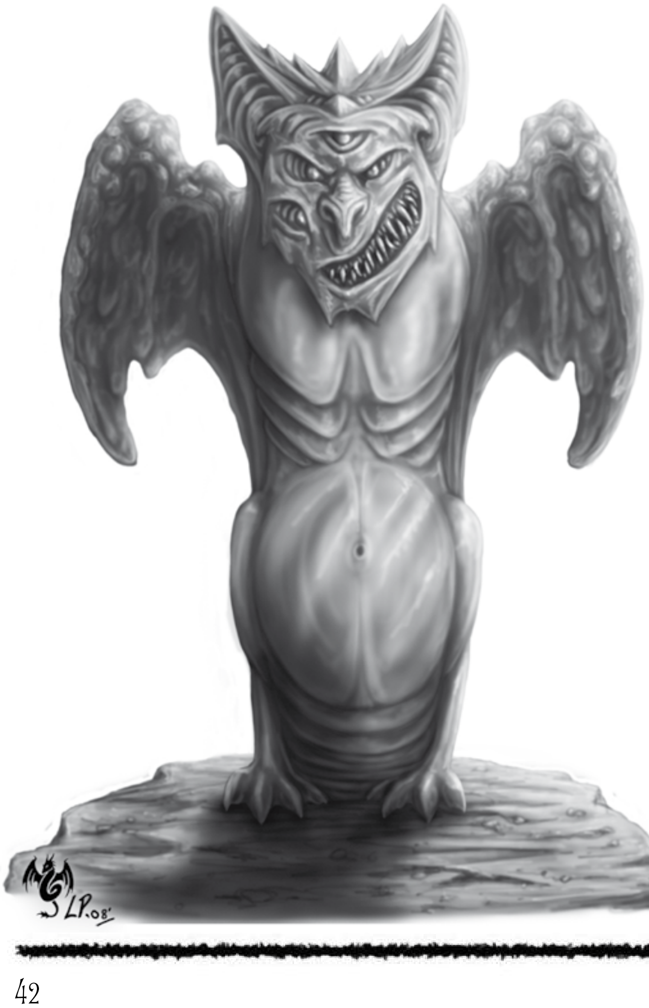
The unsuspecting people of Middle Harling know nothing of the temple or its dark past. Perhaps now that a team of eager archaeologists have arrived the secrets of the past can begin to be revealed...

Recent Events

The Cambridge University Archaeological Department became involved when a curious statuette, (one of the Vaeyen), was discovered by Middle Harling resident John Flemming, who was out walking his dog in Soldier's Wood. Being an amateur archaeologist himself, Flemming excitedly contacted Cambridge University about the unusual find.

A team of four archaeologists were dispatched to Middle Harling to determine whether there were grounds for a full-scale dig at the site. The team, led by Professor Hubert Winstanley, quickly found evidence of a small Roman settlement and proceeded to ask the University to send more archaeologists to the site so that a full excavation of the area could be undertaken.

Winstanely's advanced team have been at the site for three weeks, conducting initial excavation, clearing the land, removing topsoil from around what appears to be a Roman era villa. Five days ago, Professor Martin Watson unearthed a statuette bearing a terrible familiarity to the one found by John Flemming. With such early success, the team is in high spirits and are pleased to see the investigators arrive in the hope that with an increased team more discoveries will be sure to follow.



The Vaeyen

Fearful looking things, each Vaeyen (there are five in total) appears to have been carved from a single piece of dark bluish-green crystal. Each one depicts a snarling bat-like monstrosity, all eyes and teeth, which seem to leer evilly at the viewer. A pair of small, lumpy, wings grow out of the creature's back.

Despite being buried deep in the earth for centuries, the crystals are undamaged and are icy smooth to the touch; yet feel as if covered in a greasy film – leaving the handler with tingling fingers, lasting about a minute. Should attempts be made to 'clean' them, the sticky film cannot be removed.

Each varies slightly in size; however, all are approximately eight to twelve inches high with a diameter of six inches, weighing around 20lbs each.

Investigators making successful Geology checks can confirm that the crystal is unknown to them, with a critical success denoting that the crystal is definitely not of this earth – perhaps of meteoric origination. Putting a time on the age of the artefacts is likewise impossible. What is clear is that each statuette is carved from a single piece of faultless crystal.

Investigators employing a successful Cthulhu Mythos check are able to recall that such statuettes were used in warding and protection ceremonies, often named as 'Vaeyen' in blasphemous texts. The origin of the crystal is most definitely off-world, quite possibly from the dark and cold planet known only as Yuggoth.

However, trouble is brewing. The removal of the two Vaeyen from the ground means that the wards holding Cyaegha are broken and the whole area is now at risk. Come evening of 24rd September – the Autumnal Equinox – should the proper summoning ritual be conducted, Cyaegha will break free of his 'gaolers' and manifest in Soldier's Wood to the ruin of the archaeologists and Middle Harling!

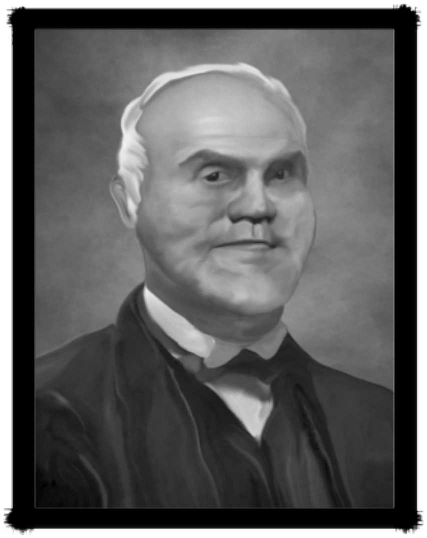
To make matters worse, Cyaegha, its power slowly increasing, has focused its inhuman energy at two individuals – Professor Watson (directing him to find the Vaeyen) and Sam Blackstock, a local poacher. As the equinox approaches, Cyaegha's power continues to build enabling it to fully possess both of these unfortunate men, directing them to take the uncovered Vaeyen and hide them to prevent any possibility of the statuettes being 'reset' in the warding pattern.

Cyaegha continues to send Professor Watson dark dreams, which not only point the way to the resting places of the remaining Vaeyen but also instil knowledge of the ritual required to summon the god of darkness. Cyaegha's dream sending makes him increasingly unstable as each night the poor fellow's sanity is eroded to nothingness.

The Advance Archaeological Team

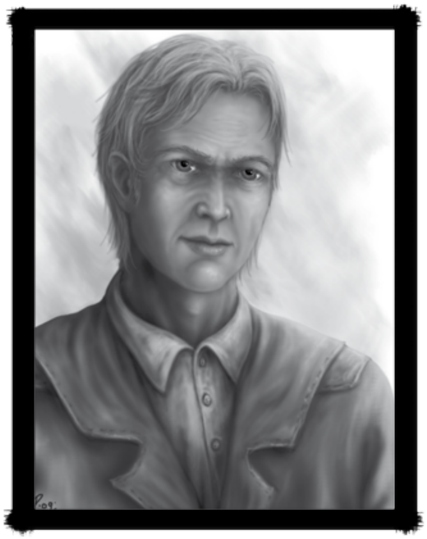
The advance team is comprised of two well-respected archaeologists, an up-and-coming graduate student and an administrator. Full statistics for them can be found on page 61 in **Protagonists & Villains**.

Professor Hubert Winstanley



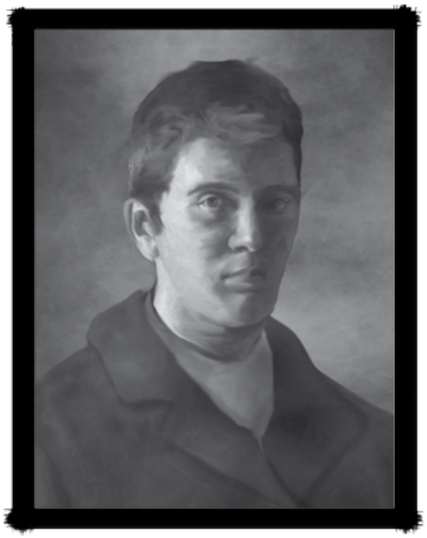
A loud domineering man, Winstanley grossly overplays the role of the eccentric university professor. Of stocky build, he is a portly balding bully. Under his bullish behaviour, Winstanley is a terrible coward more likely to cower and scream when the chips are down. He values the safety of his own hide above that of all others.

Professor Martin Watson



Slight of build, pale and quiet, Watson is a bookish and extremely serious middle-aged man. He has a reputation for not suffering fools gladly and his highly vocal arguments with Professor Winstanley are a source of much gossip amongst Cambridge undergraduates. Since his arrival at Soldier's Wood, Watson has been receiving the malignant dreams of Cyaegha, each one filled with unholy images, inhuman whispers and the soul-wrenching blackness of the void. As Cyaegha's grip on Watson grows, so his sanity is destroyed. Directed through the foul nightmares, Watson continues to uncannily uncover a further Vaeyen each day until all five have been uncovered. Once all five statuettes have been unearthed, Watson proposes (and loudly argues) that all of the 'artefacts' be taken to Cambridge as soon as possible for proper study. If the poacher, Blackstock, has already stolen one or more of the Vaeyen, Watson uses this to support his argument that the artefacts are unsafe here and must be taken to Cambridge at once. Come the evening of the Autumnal Equinox, Watson's possession will be complete and he enacts the ritual to summon his new master – Cyaegha.

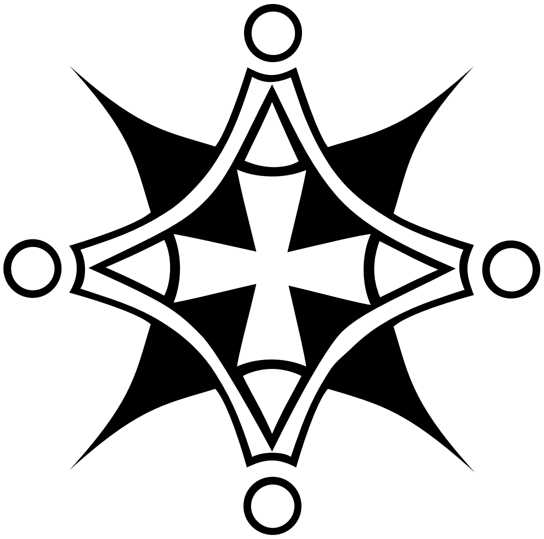
David Pitman, Post-Graduate Student



A Cambridge rugby Blue, Pitman is an outdoors type, equally at home on the face of a mountain or in a rowing boat. He cuts an imposing figure, square jaw and keen intelligent crystal blue eyes. Clean living with strong Church of England beliefs, Pitman does not stand for 'radicals' of any stripe.

Janet Wilson, Clerk to Prof. Winstanley

Regarded as studious and somewhat plain, Janet Wilson spends much of her time cataloguing artefacts, typing up Prof. Winstanley's notes and running errands. Janet yearns to be taken seriously by her male colleagues and, indeed, she can be formidable when crossed. Of all of the advance party, Janet is the one most likely to be level-headed in a crisis situation.



Events Unfold

The following sequence of events happen as indicated on the **Timeline of Events** (see page 45) although, depending on the investigators curiosity and activities, Keepers may wish to move the events, as needed, in order to ensure that logic prevails. All of the events may be repositioned in this manner except for **Blackstock Returns** and **Dark Equinox,** which both form the scenario's penultimate event and climax, respectively.

Keepers are invited to invent their own events to throw into the mix, perhaps utilising the residents of Middle Harling to further confound or distract the investigators. Certainly, as noted in the **People and Places of Interest in Middle Harling** (see page 55), the villagers are likely to want to keep abreast of the city folk's comings and goings and may lead one or more of them to visit the dig site to gather gossip and news. Some of the more youthful residents may be lured to the woods and dig site by the thought of buried treasure – perhaps, when they discover only broken pottery and not the piles of golden coins their greedy minds envisaged, they take to stealing from the tents of the investigators.

Naturally, should word reach the village of accidents, crimes or even murder, Constable Cracknell arrives, packed lunch in hand, to inspect and deal with the incident accordingly.

Arrival

Scene Essentials

- Investigators are introduced to Winstanley's team and are shown around the camp and dig site.

Scene Details and Description

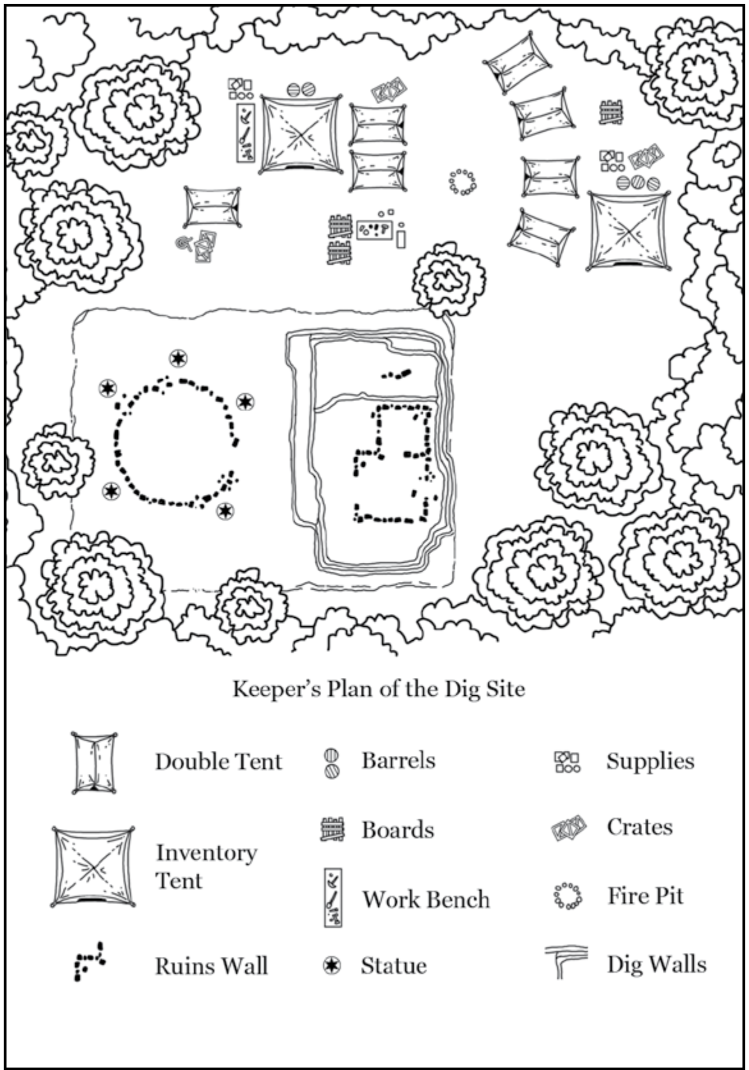
The scenario begins around 10.30am on Friday 21st September 1934 with the investigators arriving at the dig site. Stan Anesty, a haulier from Cambridge, has been paid to drop the archaeologists off on his way east to Lowestoft.

After a pleasant journey through the Cambridgeshire fens, the investigators are brought to Soldier's Wood by way of narrow country lanes, sweet bird song and a bright midday sun. Anesty wastes no time in off-loading all of the investigator's belongings and shouting his goodbyes. Within moments, Anesty and his little truck are long gone, leaving the party surrounded by the cheery faces of the advance team,

Timeline of Events

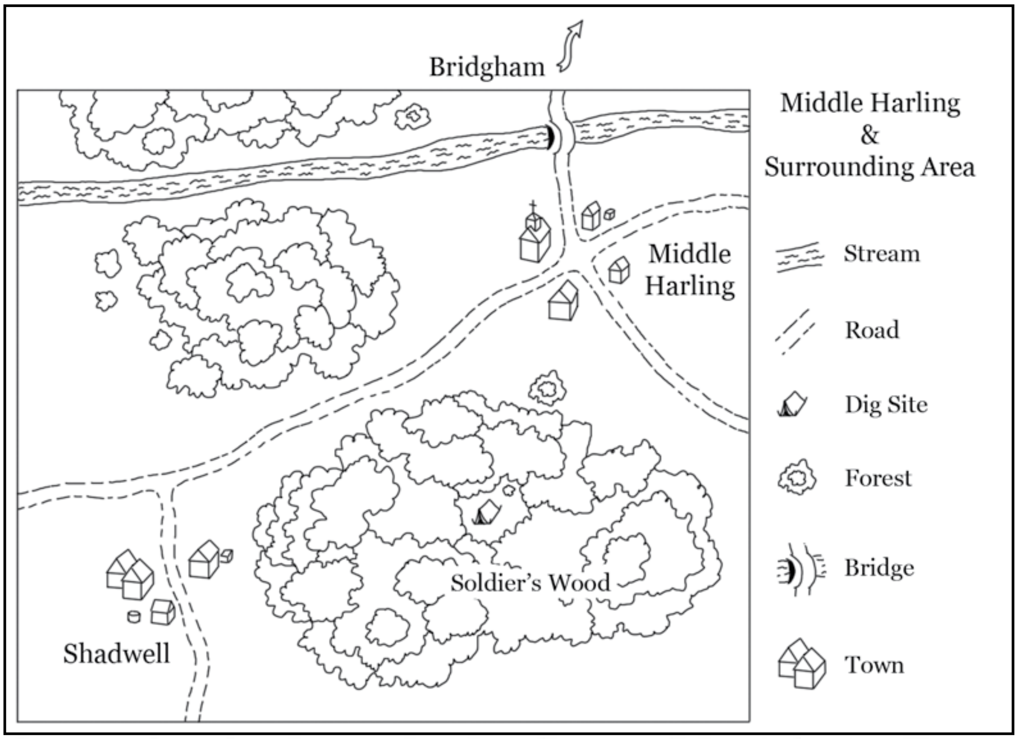
The likely sequence of events follows, although Keepers should feel free to change the order of events and elaborate as necessary in response to lines of investigator enquiry.

–2 months	John Flemming discovers a Vaeyen (#1).
–3 weeks	Winstanley's team arrives in Middle Harling and sets up the dig site.
–5 days	Watson unearths Vaeyen #2.
Friday 21st September	(Mid Morning) The investigators arrive at the dig site. (Day) Discovery of the Roman Tablet (page 47).
Saturday 22nd September	(Morning) One of our Vaeyen is Missing (page 48). (Day) The Body (page 48). (Afternoon) Watson unearths Vaeyen #3 (page 50). (Night) Dark Dreams #1 (page 51).
Sunday 23rd September	(Afternoon) Watson unearths Vaeyen #4. (Day or Evening) Blackstock Returns! (page 51). (Night) Dark Dreams #2 (page 52).
Monday 24th September	(Day) Watson unearths Vaeyen #5. (Evening) Dark Equinox (page 52).



Keeper's Plan of the Dig Site

Double Tent
Barrels
Supplies
Inventory Tent
Boards
Crates
Work Bench
Fire Pit
Ruins Wall
Statue
Dig Walls



Bridgham
Middle Harling
&
Surrounding Area
Middle Harling
Soldier's Wood
Shadwell
Stream
Road
Dig Site
Forest
Bridge
Town

Soldier's Wood

Soldier's Wood covers 10 acres in area and is largely untouched by man. A meandering network of trails, many overgrown, criss-crosses through a dense undergrowth of brambles, nettles and hawthorn bushes. It is dark and eerie in the heart of the wood, slim shafts of daylight filter down through the myriad of branches. The air is cool and moist. Visitors find the woods a foreboding place, sensing that some unknown presence is watching. Whilst bird song can be heard around the periphery, within the dark centre there is only a strange unsettling silence. Around the wood's boundary are signs declaring *No Poaching! By authority of the Bridgham and Area Town Council.*

When walking through Soldier's Wood, Investigators with POW 16 or greater should make a POW x 2 roll. A success means that the unfortunate investigator suffers a headache causing a –5 penalty to all skill rolls whilst in the woods. The headache diminishes as soon as the investigator leaves the woods. This irritating effect is caused by Cyaegha's growing power, manifesting as psychic waves.

Should the investigators decide to undertake a thorough search of Soldier's Woods call for a Spot Hidden check every 1D4 hours. The following is selection of what may be uncovered:

1 – the rotting carcass of a rabbit or a small deer is discovered caught in a snare (one of Blackstock's traps).

2 – an oil soaked bundle of cloth containing a hidden cache of poacher's tools including wire, wooden pegs, twine, hunting and skinning knives (blood stained).

3 – ammunition carton half-buried and covered with loose soil. Inside is a 1915 British service revolver and pack of bullets belonging to Blackstock.

4 – if a search is conducted after the theft of any of the Vaeyen, a single statuette is discovered wrapped in a foul smelling greasy cloth.

Keepers may choose to place far more dangerous traps in the investigator's path – foothold traps. These cruel devices are made up of two iron jaws, a spring and a trigger in the middle. When the animal (or unwitting investigator) steps on the trigger the trap closes around the foot, preventing escape. Keepers should call for Spot Hidden rolls (or roll these in secret) to determine if a foothold trap is seen before it is stood upon. Failure indicates that the trap has been sprung, causing a painful 1D4 damage (60% it is the right leg) plus the unfortunate investigator suffers –20 to all physical skills (including Dodge and Attack rolls) for 1d6 hours per point of damage. The trap can be removed by pulling the iron jaws apart and quickly withdrawing the leg before the jaws snap back.

who all come forward to help carry bags and orientate the new arrivals.

The Camp Site

The camp is a basic affair, consisting of canvas tents, a smouldering cooking fire and a variety of equipment – tables, boxes, tools and wooden planks abound.

There are six double tents:

- Double tent – Janet Wilson plus one female investigator
- Double tent – Professor Watson shares with David Pitman
- Double tent – Professor Winstanley does not share
- Double tent – for two investigators
- Double tent – for two investigators
- Double tent – for two investigators

In addition, there are two large "inventory" tents in which items are cleaned, catalogued and stored, as well as a spare double tent that is currently being used as a larder.

Note that the original Vaeyen statuette, found by Flemming, is in the possession of Winstanley and is currently kept in his tent for personal study. He will gladly show it to any investigators who ask to view it, but is reluctant to part with for any length of time – whilst he may appear dubious to suspicious minds, in actual fact Winstanley is merely ensuring that a rare and probably priceless find is safe; he simply doesn't trust anyone else to take care of the object.

Keepers may wish to play up this aspect of Winstanley and his 'apparent' possessiveness of the statuette as a red herring.

Water is collected from the stream, about three-quarters of a mile to the East of the camp and dig site. Janet Wilson ensures that the newcomers take their turn on the *"fetching the water rota"*, and any females or undergraduate students are quickly inducted into the daily chores of cooking meals, washing pots and generally helping to keep the place clean and tidy.

The Dig Site

Almost indistinguishable from the campsite is the area of the dig, roughly a square measuring 80 x 60 feet, where the topsoil has been dug away to reveal various levels of earth. The topmost portions of a series of stonewalls, presumably the Roman villa, can be seen peaking through the uncovered earth. Various measuring sticks, hammers, trowels and spades lie around.

Friday 21st September

Discovery of the Roman Tablet

Scene Essentials

- Archaeology rolls to determine who finds the Roman tablet.
- David Pitman discovers the tablet if the investigators are unable to do so.
- Only one half of the tablet is found, the missing half is in the Red Lion pub.

Scene Details and Description

As soon as the investigators have settled in at the camp (had a cup of tea, decided on their sleeping arrangements and dumped their bags in their tents, etc.), Winstanley puts them to work on the dig. Unless any of the investigators argue otherwise, Winstanley directs each of them to particular patches of earth to either clear away soil or to undertake more careful study (brushing away soil from unearthed walls and the like).

Call for Archaeology rolls, the investigator who gets the best result finds an ancient Roman tablet. If no one succeeds at the roll, have David Pitman discover

Digging in the Dirt

For every 1D4 hours spent working at the site, each investigator may make an Archaeology roll to determine whether they have uncovering a Roman artefact. Failure simply means that the time has been spent clearing away more layers of soil from around the buried stonewalls.

Likely artefacts include pottery plates, vases and jugs –whole and partial fragments, metal objects like spear tips or coins, or even a corroded pugio – a Roman knife.

Anyone making a critically successful Archaeology roll has uncovered a precious artefact, possibly a Roman gladius, a centurion's helmet or even a portion of armour.

Should an investigator indicate that they are digging in an area that coincides with the exact location of a buried Vaeyen (see the Keeper's Map of the Dig Site); there is a chance that they may uncover the statuette (secretly give a + 30% to the investigator's Archaeology roll). Of course, any Vaeyen found by the investigators cannot then be found by Watson, and vice versa.

The Tablet Restored

If the two pieces of the Roman tablet are brought together from the dig site and the Red Lion they fit together, allowing the full inscription to be read with a successful Read Latin roll.

The tablet describes the arrival of a Roman garrison to the area and its dealings with the local people and their god, a great creature of darkness that plagued the land and demanded tribute. The writing goes on to tell how the garrison's commander joined in the worship of the god, a being named *'Cyaegha – the One in Darkness'*, and how the god was imprisoned to allow its worshippers to draw upon its essence.

The inscription also provides a recitation of the *'words of power'* used to bind Cyaegha. This binding spell can be learnt with an INT x 4 roll and costs 2 POW and 1D8 SAN to cast.

The spell requires that five 'wardens', called Vaeyen, must be present at the site and each must be covered in earth and remain there for the binding to continue working, which may only be performed at the equinox.

the tablet. Pitman calls over one of the investigators to help him unearth the object.

The tablet is quite well intact, although at some point in time it has been cracked down the middle, presumably breaking into two parts. Despite further searching, the missing half cannot be found (the second half is in fact on the wall of the Red Lion pub – see page 57).

The tablet is inscribed in Latin and requires a Read Latin roll success in order to read. Unfortunately, having only one half of the tablet provides the reader with nothing more than semi complete phrases that make no sense.

Saturday 22nd September

One of Our Vaeyen is Missing

Scene Essentials

- Saturday morning at breakfast.
- David Pitman discovers a statuette is missing.
- The thief's heavy boot-prints lead to and from the inventory tent.

Scene Details and Description

Saturday's breakfast is interrupted by David Pitman announcing that the statuette found by Professor Watson is missing from the inventory tent. None of the archaeologists know where the statuette could be and all seem to remember seeing it in the inventory tent yesterday.

Winstanley immediately goes to check upon the whereabouts of the original statuette and is relieved to find it where he left it – in his tent. He immediately suspects that one of the younger members of the team has mislaid the artefact and orders everyone to conduct a thorough search of their tents, the camp and the area of the dig.

Whilst a Spot Hidden success does not turn up the missing statuette, it will reveal a set of deep, hobnail boot prints in the earth in and around the inventory tent wherein the artefact was last seen. A Tracking success determines that whomever the boot prints belong to entered the campsite from the west, made a more or less straight line to the inventory tent and then proceeded to exit the camp, returning westwards.

Further study of the boot prints reveals that whoever was wearing them is a large, heavy man as the impressions are deep and wide. A successful Idea roll suggests that the boots are size ten.

Anyone wishing to follow the tracks into the forest must make a successful Tracking or half Spot Hidden roll. Move on to **The Body** (below).

The Body

Scene Essentials

- Hobnail boot prints lead west into the heart of Soldier's Wood.
- Two sets of footprints suggest a struggle.
- The body of a murdered traveller is discovered nearby.
- The traveller has suffered a head injury and had his heart ripped out of his chest.
- The hobnail boot prints lead off from the scene to the south.

Scene Details and Description

This event assumes that the investigators decide to follow the hobnail boot prints of the culprit who stole the statuette as described in the One of Our Vaeyen is Missing scene and leads on from that point. Should the investigators not follow this path, this event can take place at any time the archaeologists decide to wander in the woods.

Following the footprints into the woods requires a successful Tracking or half Spot Hidden roll. The trail leads west and then turns southwards through dense undergrowth and ancient trees. The tracks lead to a boot sticking out of a clump of brambles, nettles and blackberries.

On further investigation the (size eight) boot is attached to a body, obscured in the foliage, of a dishevelled young man in his early twenties. Dressed in a tattered patchwork of ill-fitting clothes, the man was presumably a vagrant. The back of the man's head has suffered a heavy blow from a blunt object. A more thorough search of the body reveals blood stains on the front of the man's shirt that come from a strange puncture wound in the man's chest.

If a medical examination of the body takes place a further shocking discovery is made – the man's heart is missing. Presumably torn through the hole in his chest, which was the cause of death.

Sanity Loss for uncovering the body is 0/1D2.

How he came to be wandering through Soldier's Wood is a mystery. There are four farthings in a trouser pocket, but no identification on the body, The tracks the investigators have been following clearly lead to the body and there appears to have been some kind of scuffle, according to the mess of footprints in the area. The size ten prints continue southwards. Following these leads the investigators to **The Cottage in the Wood** (the next scene).

Should the investigators summon the local policeman, George Cracknell, he is very concerned pacing back and forth, muttering to himself in deep thought. The constable has never had to deal with a suspicious death before – he's more used to the odd farm accident. After taking statements, Cracknell asks the investigators to help him move the body to the village where it will wait until collected by the authorities from Bridgham.

Cracknell has no idea who the man was, venturing that he was probably a traveller or gypsy sleeping rough in the woods. Certainly none of the residents remembers seeing the deceased man around the village. Cracknell cautions the investigators about staying out in the woods with a murderer on the loose. He recommends that they all relocate to the Red Lion in the village.

Anyone voicing an opinion about the possible connection between the body and Sam Blackstock's disappearance (see **The Red Lion Public House and Inn** on page 57) makes Cracknell pause for thought. The policeman feels the two incidents might be connected; however, he is wary of suggestions that place Blackstock as the murderer as he believes the poacher to be lying low somewhere due to the fact that he is wanted for questioning about a theft of cattle from a local farm. If the investigators have already spotted Blackstock or had a run in with him, Cracknell takes the suggestions far more seriously and asks the investigators to lead him to the spot where they last saw the poacher.

In actual fact, the deceased man was indeed a traveller who was simply passing through the wood on his way to the coast. The unfortunate man encountered Blackstock last night, not long after Blackstock had stolen the Vaeyen from the camp. Blackstock, now possessed by Cyaegha, murdered the man by bashing him over the head with a cosh and then sucked-out his heart through his chest.

The Cottage in the Woods

Scene Essentials

- The cottage is hidden and can only be found with a successful Spot Hidden roll.
- Three rooms all on one level – sitting room, kitchen and bedroom.
- The bed shows signs of recent use, as well as ghastly bloodstains.
- Rotting animal carcasses litter the kitchen inducing nausea.
- A horrific lidless eye is inscribed into the sitting room wall, causing viewers to fall into a terrifying unconsciousness should a POW x 5 roll be failed.
- 10% chance that Blackstock returns with murderous intent.

Scene Details and Description

This encounter only takes place if the investigators follow the size ten boot prints from the scene of **The Body** or if, later in the scenario, they make a purposeful search for Blackstock's secret cottage hideout.

The cottage is hidden deep in the south of Soldier's Wood, overgrown with tendrils of ivy, weeds and packed between gnarly oak, cedar and ash trees. A casual observer could quite easily miss the decrepit cottage, so hidden as its dark situation in the trees. Investigators must succeed in a Spot Hidden roll if they are to discover the long abandoned dwelling.

Gaining entry is simple enough, the door stands slightly ajar; the hinges long rusted and damaged. Inside the floor and every surface is covered in a layer of grime and dirt. Large (size ten) boot prints are easily discerned throughout.

The interior of the cottage consists of three rooms; a sitting room, a kitchen and a bedroom. It is clear that no one has called this place home for many a year, although signs of someone residing here are obvious as the bed has recently been slept in. Disturbing red stains cover the filthy bed sheets.

Far worse can be found in the kitchen. Amidst cracked pots and dirt encrusted utensils are the rotting remains of numerous animals. The stench is nearly unbearable. A deer carcass hangs from a hook in the ceiling, its festering entrails hang from its belly; whilst numerous rabbits lie strewn about on the floor and work surfaces. All look (and smell) like they have been here for weeks. Tell tale marks in the flesh reveal the wounds caused by snares and traps. Investigators lingering in the kitchen must roll their CON x 5 or suffer a bought of nausea.

Perhaps the most chilling discovery can be found in the sitting room, where a gigantic lidless eye has been 'drawn' on the wall above a small open fireplace. The eye has been fashioned with a black ink-like substance (actually blood and black pus extruded from Blackstock's body), and seems to follow the investigators around the room. The feeling is unnerving and anyone remaining in the sitting room for longer than five minutes must succeed in a POW x 5 roll or fall unconscious for 1D10 minutes. Whilst unconscious, the unfortunate investigator suffers a lucid dream where they are falling to their death in what seems to be bottomless pitch-black pit. On awaking, the investigator loses 1 SAN.

There is a 10% chance that Blackstock returns to the cottage whilst the investigators are there. In this event, Blackstock unleashes an inhuman wail and charges through the cottage door, barrelling into the nearest investigator. The possessed poacher attempts to kill anyone who is in the cottage. However, if Blackstock suffers more than 5 Hit Points damage he leaps through the nearest exist (probably a window) and disappear into the woods – Cyaegha does not wish to lose its servant before it is certain that the Vaeyen have been removed and the binding enchantments broken.

In the event that the investigators are able to kill Blackstock, Cyaegha focuses all of its attention and energy on Professor Watson in order to clear the way for its emergence on the equinox.

Full statistics for Sam Blackstock can be found on page 63 in **Protagonists & Villains**.

Watson Unearths the Vaeyen

Scene Essentials

- Watson is possessed by Cyaegha.
- Each day, Watson unearths another Vaeyen until all five have been found.
- Use Blackstock as 'muscle' to confront and distract the investigators.
- At sunset on the equinox, Blackstock and Watson return to the dig site to release Cyaegha.

Scene Details and Description

Whilst some, or all, of the investigators may have been chasing about the woods all day long, members of the original archaeological team have been busy continuing their work. Indeed, Professor Watson spends all of Saturday intently searching through the soil and pays little attention or heed to the comings and goings of those around him. At some point, probably late afternoon, Watson unearths another statuette – the third to have been brought to light.

The statuette resembles the ones found previously and Watson is clearly pleased with his success, taking the statuette to one of the inventory tents to clean it up. Watson keeps the statuette in his tent and if confronted about this he states that it will be much safer in his possession, especially so with a thief about. If forced or persuaded to give up the artefact, Watson appears a little annoyed but remains calm. Secretly, he plans to retrieve the statuette (hiding it in his tent) from wherever it is being kept and then blame the loss on the unknown thief.

On each day following, Watson uncovers a further Vaeyen until all five have been discovered – the fifth and final one being unearthed on the morning of Monday 24th September, the Autumnal Equinox. Throughout this period Watson, attempts to ensure that either he has the remaining statuettes in his possession (secretly or otherwise) or, at the very least, that he knows their whereabouts.

Cyaegha has 'touched' Watson and the dark god is, essentially, using him to unearth the Vaeyen; however, this form of possession is relatively weak as the Great Old One's power is mostly being channelled into Sam Blackstock. As the equinox approaches, Cyaegha's powers increase and Watson falls more under the god's spell. Centuries of captivity have given Cyaegha the opportunity to develop its plan and the Great Old One is not going to risk its freedom on a single puny human! Hence why both Blackstock and Watson are in its thrall.

Essentially, Blackstock is the muscle and will be used to 'remove' any human barriers to the gods' release, and also acts as the obvious focus of the investigators attention right up to the evening of the equinox; whilst Watson works below the 'radar', removing the five Vaeyen and breaking the wards holding the dark god in.

On the evening of the equinox, Watson and Blackstock work to ensure that the Vaeyen are removed from the area of the dig site in Soldier's Wood, as well as performing the ritual to release Cyaegha. Only the investigators can stand in their way...

Attempted Shortcuts & Easy Answers

Whilst the scenario follows a definite timeline of key events and, ultimately, a clear deadline in terms of the Autumnal Equinox, Keepers should allow the investigators free reign to decide their fate. Likewise, should the investigators find themselves at a loss for where to proceed next, the Keeper is advised to make full use of the characters to be found in Middle Harling who, from time to time, make the trek to the dig site to see for themselves what the city folk have 'dug up'. Any of these personalities can bring news to tantalize and inspire the investigators to follow new lines of enquiry. Should more direct action be required, the Keeper should feel free to make things more 'personal' by having the possessed poacher, Blackstock, attack in order to steal more of the Vaeyen, or perhaps the investigators are awoken in the middle of the night by a naked 'sleep walking' Professor Watson, franticly digging in the earth with his bare hands and muttering strange words – the investigators terrified to see that his eyes are no longer human, but soulless orbs of utter darkness…

Dark Dreams #1

This event occurs during the night of Saturday 21st September, whilst they are tucked up in their sleeping bags. All of the investigators, Winstanley, Pitman and Janet Wilson are plagued by horrific dreams, causing them all restless sleep. Read or paraphrase the following:

You stand alone upon a desolate, dark plain. A sickly, pale white light fills the sky and a low monotonous hum fills the air. Cold and isolated, you feel fear gnawing at the corners of your mind, as the thin, pale light begins to diminish and the sky grows darker and darker until there is only blackness. As the darkness descends, it seems to absorb and envelop everything, the air grows thick and it becomes hard to breathe. You choke as you gasp for air, quickly growing weaker with every second that passes, until you fall to the ground, suffocating. In unison with the growing darkness, the humming sound grows in intensity, getting louder and louder until it becomes a deafening roar of alien noise. There is no escape. You are lost. Icy tendrils of darkness reach irresistibly towards you, enveloping you entirely.

Then they wake up, covered in cold sweat and their throat parched and dry. Sleep does not easily return. SAN Loss is 1/1D4 for suffering this nightmare.

Sunday 23rd September

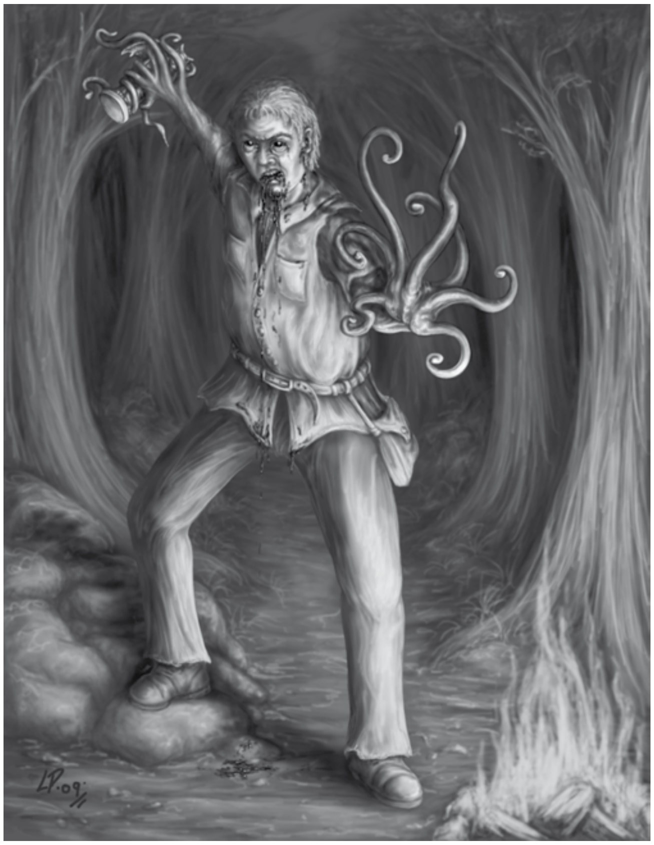
Blackstock Returns!

Keeper's Essentials

- Blackstock always knows where the Vaeyen are hidden.
- He steals as many Vaeyen as he can and hides them at the hidden cottage.
- If he loses 50% of his Hit Points he runs away.

Scene Details and Description

The investigators get the opportunity to meet Blackstock face to face when he returns to the camp to steal any of the remaining Vaeyen that have been unearthed so far. This event can take place at any point during the day or night, dependent on the whereabouts of the investigators. Ideally, having the



possessed poacher creep into the camp in the middle of night to appear in one of the investigator's tents, looming over their sleeping bag would be suitably terrifying.

Note that Blackstock, directed by Cyaegha, can sense the presence of the Vaeyen and goes wherever they are – sneaky investigators may try to hide the statuettes in the camp or elsewhere. It matters not as Blackstock is unerringly drawn to their hiding places. Cyaegha wishes to ensure that the Vaeyen are out of the hands of anyone who could potentially interfere with its bid for freedom, using Blackstock to track the hideous bat totems down and carry them away to the cottage in the wood – hopefully, far enough away to not get in the way of its 'glorious' return.

Anyone attempting to stop the crazed poacher is attacked, but as soon as all of the Vaeyen are in his arms, Blackstock makes a run for it into the woods (heading to the cottage by a circuitous route). Should the poacher lose half of his Hit Points he also leaves, only to return on the equinox to finish his 'work'.

Dark Dreams #2

As the equinox draws near, the nightmares grow more frightening as everyone in the camp is subjected to another night of fitful sleep and bad dreams. Read or paraphrase the following:

You, again, stand alone upon a desolate plain with an unwholesome pale light shining down upon you. A thin film of sweat beads down your head and there is an air of expectancy all around. The ground beneath begins to shake and tremble. Shapes break through the crust of the ground, rising out of the earth all around you. The ground shifts violently, knocking you to hard earth. Five gigantic versions of the evil-looking bat statuettes burst upwards, towering over you. Tendrils of dark matter reach down from the ever-darkening sky to clutch and grab at the statues, tearing them out of the ground with a hideous strength, smashing them to pieces. Deadly chunks of stone fall all around, narrowly missing you. As the fifth and final statue is destroyed, the darkness is complete. A loud, mocking laugh echoes through your head, you cry out in the awful knowledge that the darkness has triumphed.

SAN Loss is 1/1D4 for suffering this nightmare.

Monday 24th September

Dark Equinox

Scene Details and Description

The final climax takes place at sunset on Monday 24th September – the Autumnal Equinox. The investigators have until sunset to avert the release of Cyaegha or they and the village of Middle Harling are doomed. There are two ways whereby the intrepid investigators can prevent such a terrible event occurring:

1. Retrieve all five Vaeyen and re-align them in the earth at the dig site using the ceremony described on the Roman tablet – providing that they can find and put to the two halves of the tablet together.

2. Learn the Vach-Viraj Incantation and perform it at the equinox in order to prevent Cyaegha's release or send the Great Old One back from whence it came. Discovering the incantation is no small feat as Greap's notes sit amongst a stack of forgotten papers within the vault of the local church.

Additionally, the investigators must incapacitate or otherwise prevent Watson and Blackstock – the possessed minions of Cyaegha – from stealing the Vaeyen away and performing the rites to summon the dark god. It is imperative that all five Vaeyen are aligned in the ground at the dig site by sunset, otherwise Cyaegha shall rise.

Throughout the day, Watson appears to be continuing with his excavations; pottering around, digging here and there and undertaking some survey work. He spends much of his time quietly whistling

Quick Thinking Saves the Day?

Clever or artist-minded players may think to fashion replacement Vaeyen from stone, clay or wood. All these variations will work as long as the Vach-Viraj Incantation is performed to properly align them. Keeper's may wish to impose a greater fee on investigator's making new Vaeyen – asking for a point of POW or SAN loss to imbue the statuettes with magical energy, or the sacrifice of a pint of blood to baptise each of the Vaeyen – such costs are left to the Keeper to determine.

an unusual melody. If the investigators have grown suspicious of Watson's unerring ability to locate the statuettes, they may elect to attempt Psychology rolls; success indicates that Watson appears very happy, perhaps too much given the events of recent days. If asked about the melody he is whistling, Watson say that he's unsure what it is, it just been running through his head all day.

Around 10 o'clock, Watson unearths the fifth and final Vaeyen, demanding that he should take all the remaining statuettes back to Cambridge at once for further study and safe keeping. If asked how he intends to do this, he states that he'll ask someone in the village to take him to Bridgham and get a further lift from there back to Cambridge. At this point, logical argument doesn't work with Watson, he grows increasingly angry if he is refused until eventually storming off in to the woods.

Whether allowed to take the Vaeyen or not, Watson makes for Blackstock's hidden cottage to dump the Vaeyen (if he has them) and to wait until sunset, whereupon he and Blackstock return to the dig site in order to perform the summoning ceremony.

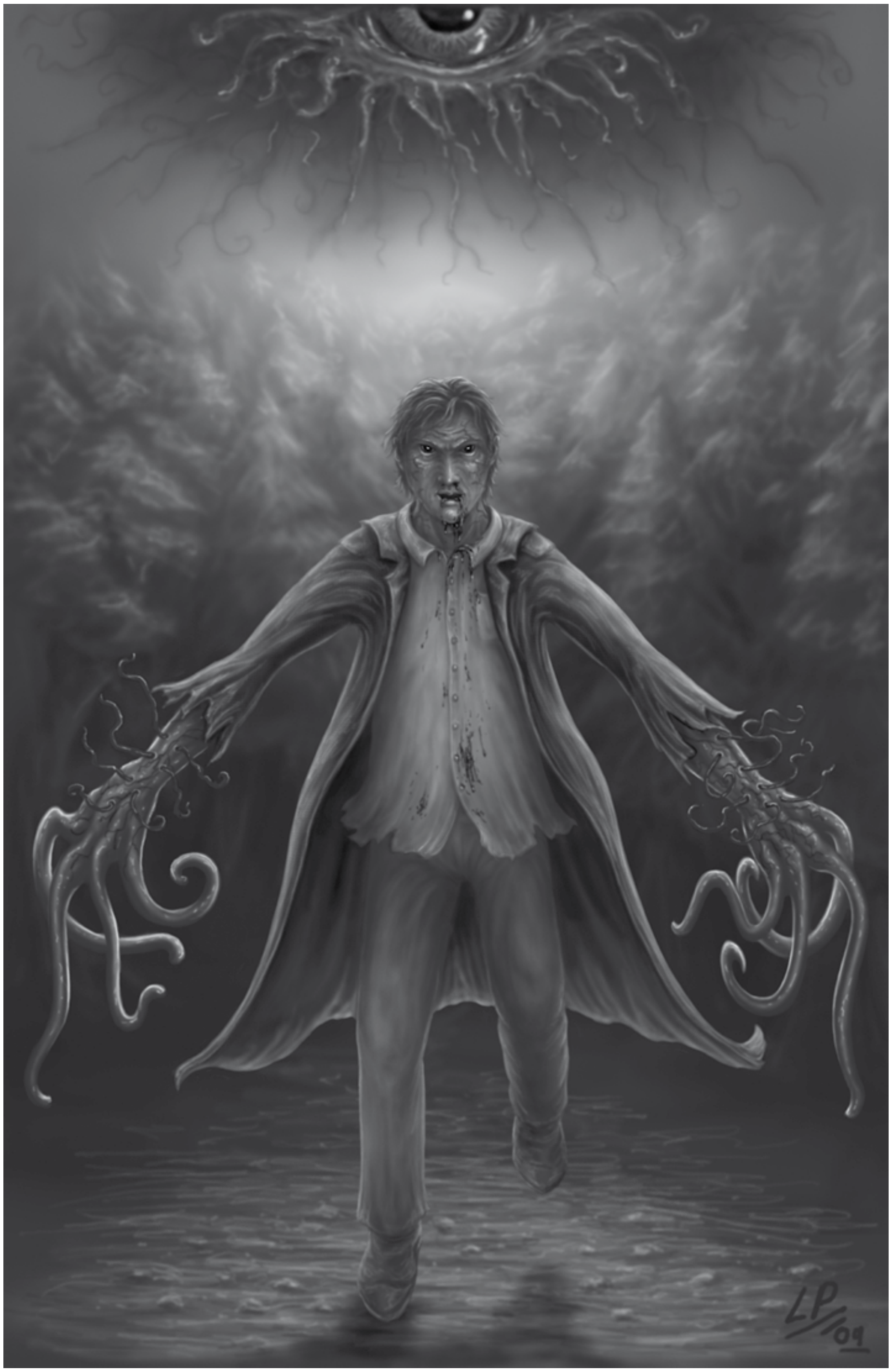
Should Watson be killed, his corpse rises again at sunset, imbued with Cyaegha's unholy power, to perform the necessary rites to summon and release the dark god.

Sunset

As sunset approaches, the investigator's time is up. Either they have realigned the Vaeyen or they are ready with the Vach-Viraj Incantation. The following assumes that the investigators have done nothing and outlines what happens when Watson and Blackstock return to the dig site in order to bring about Cyaegha's release. Keepers should adapt the following accordingly.

At sunset, the two possessed minions of Cyaegha march in to the dig site. Cyaegha has complete control over Watson and Blackstock now, their souls have been devoured and they are no more than husks for the dark energy of the Great Old One.

The pair begin speaking the rites of release. If attempts are made to prevent the rite, the deadly duo attack any and all who stand their way – all the time repeating the words of power that will set the dark god free. Each time they are cut down, they rise again in undeath to finish the terrible rite.



> ***"Hear my humble voice, thou, Lord of the Dark Hill, Thou who waits in Darkness, Great Lord of the Caves, Great Cyaegha, hear my voice and accept my tribute, and the tribute of your people, so Thou may rest in Your Darkness, Awaken from your Mountain of Darkness. Bring darkness. Come, appear."***

Soon, the sun sets and the dark rite is complete. The conclusion of this scenario is dependent upon whether the investigators have been successful in re-aligning the Vaeyen or not…

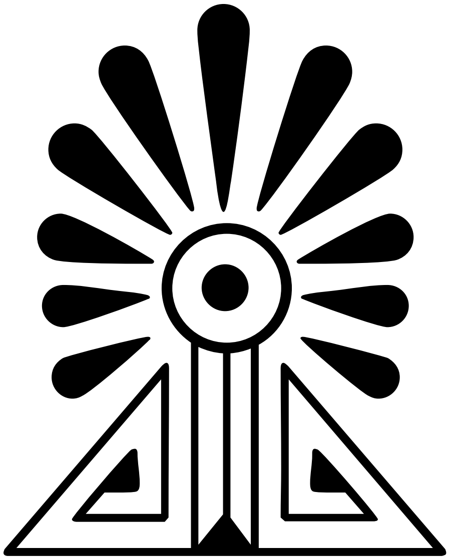
If the investigators have re-aligned the Vaeyen, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun disappears behind the trees as a thick, heavy darkness descends and the air grows chill. A cold wind seems to blow down from the sky and, as you look upwards, you see to your horror that the stars seem to be going out as a region of utter blackness grows above you. Something is coming. Something made of darkness. The air is heavy and you find it difficult to breathe.

Suddenly, the silence is broken as the Watson-thing and the poacher-thing release howls of pain, their bodies convulsing and shaking as dark tendrils gush out from their eyes and mouths into the earth at their feet. Moments later, their bodies disintegrate before your eyes, collapsing into ruin. Then, a sound cuts through your very soul, a sound you will never forget as long as you live. A sound of pain, anguish and hatred. A sound of pure rage that eventually diminishes, leaving only stillness and a sky full of stars.

However, if one or more of the Vaeyen have been removed from their positions and the rite of summoning and release completed, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun disappears behind the trees as a thick, heavy darkness descends and the air grows chill. A cold wind seems to blow down from the sky and, as you look upwards, you see to your horror that the stars seem to be going out as a region of utter blackness grows above you. Something is coming. Something made of darkness. The air is heavy and you find it difficult to breathe. Unable to stand firm, you fall to the cold earth, gasping for air as from all around a terrible humming sound grows in intensity. While your brain screams 'DON'T LOOK!', you are unable to turn your eyes from the thing that is materialising in the sky above you. A single gigantic inhuman eye, burning with sickening alien malice, stares down at you. You scream and pray that it is another dream, another nightmare come to haunt your sleep. Yet, in your heart, you know that this is no dream and that nothing can save you from the mass of black tentacles that are descending upon you, wrapping their oily limbs around your throats. A final scream. And then darkness… Forever.



People and Places of Interest in Middle Harling

The Middle Harling Library

The library is a small, two-room affair just off the main high street. The library is little used and is empty of customers whenever the investigators arrive. Jessica Brompton is the aged librarian. Ms. Brompton is partially deaf and uses a hearing trumpet when conversing with visitors to the library. Most of the time, she can be found asleep behind the desk.

The stacks consist mainly of fiction (historical romances feature heavily as they are a particular favourite of Ms. Brompton), with a smattering of non-fiction reference books. A small, but promising, local history section does exist.

Each Library Use success uncovers one piece of information from **Player Handouts 1** to 5.

Player Handout 1

Folk Tales of Thetford, A.A. Wilson, published 1908 by The Norfolk Press

One area often brought up in conversation by the local residents is Soldier's Wood, near Bridgham. Two hundred years ago, Thomas Wilkes, an infamous local poacher, claimed to have heard fairy song in the wood whilst returning from setting some snares. On investigating, Wilkes stated to a disbelieving audience in the Red Lion public house that he had been taken to the Fairy realm and shown great secrets. Publicly ridiculed by the patrons of the Red Lion, Wilkes reportedly went berserk and stabbed the landlord to death, a well-liked fellow called Bill Cosper. Wilkes was subsequently tried and hanged for murder. The villagers of Middle Harling have reported seeing Wilkes' ghost in Soldier's Wood from time to time. Locals say the ghost seeks to lead unwary travellers to the land of Fairy.

Player Handout 2

Great Walks of Norfolk, Roderick Pinder-Mandleby, published 1889 by Western Book Association

One may discover a hidden treasure of a walk in the quaint, yet delightful village of Middle Harling. The walk follows the old poacher's trail from Middle Harling through Soldier's Wood to Shadwell.

Soldier's Wood is so known due to a 16th Century dispute settled by an unnamed soldier in the service of the King. During the Autumnal Equinox, the gentlemanly soldier rescued a pretty girl, called Mary Young, who was being set upon by a band of cutthroats. In rescuing the girl, the soldier killed all four of the vagabonds. On returning to Middle Harling with the girl, the soldier was hailed as a hero and the local wood was so duly named.

Player Handout 3

Witch Cults of Middle Europe, L. Hanskoff, published 1891 by Phage

The cult of Freihausgarten worshipped 'The Waiting Dark', a fell beast who lived in the hill beyond the village, bound in by watchers known as Vaeyen. Removal or misplacement of the five bat-like idols released the beast, who would unleash a terrible wrath of living darkness.

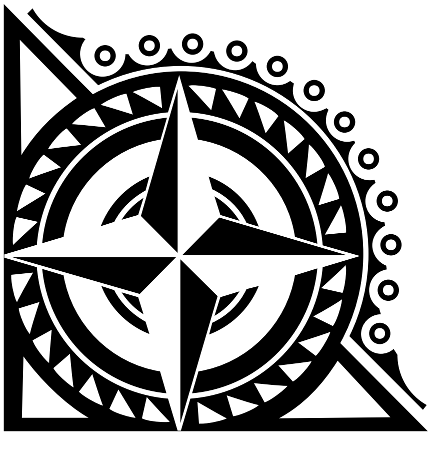
"Irgendwo, auf einem einsamen Platz, Wo Sie niemals bleiben wolten, Irgandwann, in diesen leeren Raum, Werden Sie einnen Weg finden, Das Pfad im Dunkeln, Und Dunkeln, ist mien name."

Keepers Note on Handout 3

A German Language Skill success translates the text as:

"Somewhere, in a lonely place, Where you would never want to stay, Somewhere, in that hollow space, There you will find a way, A way into darkness, And Darkness, my name is."

A Cthulhu Mythos success identifies the *The Waiting Dark* as references to the Great Old One, Cyaegha. A god of dark places, caverns who, when awoken, is brought to terrible wrath and destruction.



Player Handout 4

Equinox

EQUINOX, pronounced EE-kwuh-nahks, is either of the two days of the year when the sun is directly above the earth's equator. At these times, the days and nights are of nearly equal length everywhere on the earth. The term equinox comes from a Latin word meaning equal night. In the Northern Hemisphere, the March equinox marks the start of spring and is often called the vernal equinox. The position of the vernal equinox is called the first point of Aries. The word vernal means of spring. The September equinox marks the beginning of autumn and is called the autumnal equinox.

Equinox is a word derived from two Latin words, aequus (equal) and nox noctis (night). At the equinoxes all over the planet the length of the day equals the length of the night. The two points at which the ecliptic meets the celestial equatorial plain and where the sun, in its annual cycle moving along the ecliptic, crosses over them. The passage from one season to another is mirrored in the passage of the seasons of the soul.

Player Handout 5

The Autumnal Equinox

The Autumnal Equinox, or Mabon in pagan terms, is the celebration of harvest, a time to reflect on the successes of the fading year, those chapters of our lives that are coming to a close. We celebrate both the abundance of the earth, as well as the abundance in our lives, giving thanks for what we have received during the Wheel of the Year as the Oak King begins to make his descent into the underworld.

In the divine myth, the gates of the underworld open to accept the Oak King on Samhain (October 31st). In many traditions, this was the time of year that all spirits entered the afterlife. A time to say a final goodbye to family members and friends that have died during the previous year, as well as a time to give thanks to the animal world for the meat that we eat.

Middle Harling Police Station

Not so much a 'station', more a desk in the parlour of George Cracknell's home. Cracknell is the only policeman in the village, aged 43 he is very much the local 'bobby', well liked by the locals for his good humour and common sense, no nonsense approach. Cracknell could be a useful contact for the investigators, but he will not tolerate any talk or "*mumbo-jumbo*", as he calls it, about evil spirits and the like.

Cracknell is an affable chap who likes nothing more than a pint in the pub and an easy walk through the village twice a day. He is likely to venture over to the dig site on the day after the investigators arrive to pay his respects and to see what the "*city folk*" are up to. Unless informed of any wrongdoings, Cracknell is content stay in the village and leave the "*professors from Cambridge*" alone to do their work. Should circumstances lead to Cracknell feeling compelled to call for assistance from the police and authorities of Bridgham, such aid will not arrive until the morning after the equinox or during the final climax (see **Dark Equinox** on page 52) – Keeper's decision.

Red Lion Public House and Inn

With its exposed brickwork, heavy wooden beams and a roaring fire in the hearth, the Red Lion is a very welcoming place. Lighting is provided by gas lamps, which serve to supply a warm smoky atmosphere. The walls are festooned with old knick-knacks, brass horse plates and paintings of country life. The Landlord, Bill Travers, serves fine ales and lunchtime food with a hearty laugh and a joke. Six bedrooms provide a comfortable sleep to weary travellers.

Travers is a goldmine of local folklore – he can relate the same information as found in Player Handouts 1 and 2 with a successful Persuade roll. Travers reinforces the fact that Soldier's Wood does have a bad reputation with most of the locals, who all tend steer clear of the centre of the wood. Whilst Travers has never seen the ghost of Wilkes, he can point the investigators to Jimmy Dunklin, a regular at the Red Lion, who claims to have seen the ghost in Soldier's Wood.

The pub regulars tend to keep to themselves, but show interest in a well-to-do group of investigators – perhaps even inviting them to join a game of dominoes (in the hope that the city folk will buy them a beer). The regulars are keen to find out as much as they can about the things found at the dig site and question the investigators incessantly about the possibility of buried Roman gold and other highly exciting treasures. Further information about the pub regulars and the tales they can tell can be found in the section **The Regulars**.

Investigators succeeding in a Spot Hidden roll notice a hand-sized clay tablet, fixed to one of the pub's walls. A successful Archaeology roll determines that this tablet is Roman, probably first century AD. If asked about the tablet, Travers says that it has been up on the wall as long as he can remember. All he knows is that it was found years ago, by a previous landlord, in Soldier's Wood.

Keepers Note

The tablet is one half of the broken tablet that may be discovered at the dig site. If both pieces are brought together and deciphered, the whole tablet contains the ritual for correctly aligning the Vaeyen – preventing Cyaegha from materialising on the equinox. The tablet is written in Latin and takes 1d6 hours to translate, Spell Multiplier x 3, contains one spell – 'Watchers of the Darkness' (Align Vaeyen).

The Regulars

The following personalities can usually be found in the Red Lion most evenings from around 6pm onwards. Whilst welcoming to strangers who buy a round of drinks, the regulars are unlikely to give much more than the time of day to investigators who are outwardly hostile or snobbish.

Jimmy Dunklin

A farm hand, Jimmy can be found in the Red Lion from 8pm any night of the week. Each evening, Jimmy slowly drinks himself into a stupor and welcomes any investigators aiding him in this pursuit. After a couple of pints of best ale purchased for him, Jimmy is more than happy to tell his tale – see The Statement of Jimmy Dunklin. Should any trouble break out, Jimmy is straight to the fight, swinging arms and fists like a thing possessed.

The Statement of Jimmy Dunklin
"Well, you see, I was on my way from Shadwell back home, you know on the old poacher's trail, when I hears a strange sound. It were like the very ground itself were calling me... Sent me right cold it did, frozen to the bone! Late it was too, just past ten o'clock you see, so the woods were quiet, like. Now I can tell you, I've made that journey enough times in my life not to pay no heed to spooks and such like... But I tells you, the earth were calling to me, leading me to the centre of the wood. Well, it all went strange, and I'd eat my hat if the very air around me didn't get as black as coal. I knows it's hard for you city folk to understand, but the very air around me was like thick, dark treacle! I don't know what happened then, 'cause all I remember was waking up in the wood with dirt and earth all over me hands and clothes... As if I'd been digging and the like. I don't mind telling you I was scared. I ran home... It must have been gone three in the morning when I got in. Strangest thing was the feeling that I was supposed to find something in them woods. I've steered clear of middle of Soldier's Wood ever since then... Another pint? That would be most kind!"

Tom Nasby

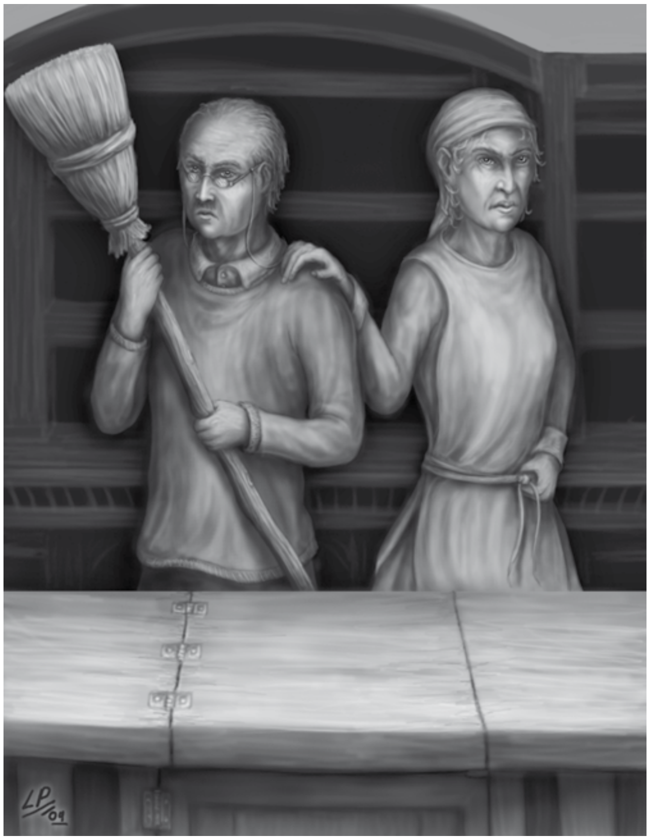
A farmer, Nasby is a large opinionated man, known for his great temper. He is a close friend of Sam Blackstock (the local poacher) and he is concerned about Blackstock's apparent disappearance. A Psychology roll success reveals that Nasby is worried over something. A Persuade or Fast Talk success (and a pint of ale) loosens his tongue and he explains that he is worried for his old friend Sam Blackstock, who he was supposed to meet over a week ago. Since then, he has not seen or heard anything from the "woodsman", as he calls him. If questioned further about the nature of Blackstock's employment or comings and goings, Nasby becomes tight-lipped, fearing to land his friend in trouble with the authorities.

Nasby is a good friend of Blackstock, often hiding the poacher from the law by letting him stay in one of his horse paddocks. However, Nasby is certain that the poacher has not slept in the horse paddock at all since his disappearance. Nasby is the only person in the village who knows that Blackstock sometimes stays at a decrepit and abandoned cottage in Soldier's Wood. Getting this information from Nasby requires a second successful Persuade or Fast Talk roll (if more ale is purchased for him apply a +10% modifier to the roll).

Ednam's Local Store

Harold Ednam runs the only general store in the village. Harold has a strict policy of only serving villagers and "well-to-do" looking people (Credit Rating rolls apply). Harold's wife, Edna, is the local gossipmonger and is all too keen to find out about the dig from the investigators. Together, they present a force to be reckoned with and woe betides any unfortunate investigator who falls foul of their initial goodwill. Investigators causing damage to the stock, stealing stock or back-chatting the couple are shown the door – picture Harold arming himself with a broom and using it to "sweep" the poor investigator out onto the street.

If the investigators are not forthcoming with "interesting" information about the dig, their discoveries and their personal situations, Edna will invent her own gossip about the archaeological team, which will soon be common knowledge to all Middle Harling residents. Enda's gossip can be as malicious or as misinformed as the Keeper wishes. Some suitable examples include:



"I 'ere they've found a box o' gold coins down in the woods. You know they're supposed to report that to the authorities. Bet they'll be keeping that to themselves."

"Them that's in the woods, you know the ones from Cambridge, are making a terrible mess. I says they oughtn't be allowed to be digging around. Disturbing what's been in the ground for centuries. Who knows what they'll dig up?"

"Well, you know the one called (insert investigator name), right snooty he was to me. Well, they'll get short shrift if they come back to my shop! I reckon them city folk should bugger off back to where they came from and leave us quiet folk alone. You know I'm sure I saw one of 'em with a big knife. Do you think I should tell Constable Cracknell?"

John Flemming's House

Flemming lives in a lovely, small cottage not far along the row from George Cracknell's house. Ivy festoons the front, leaving only the windows and front door visible. The front garden houses a fine vegetable patch and littering the pathway to the front door are numerous small fossils and curious looking stones (finds from Flemming's many amateur archaeology "hunts").

Flemming is only too happy to talk to the investigators about the statuette, equally he is eager to learn what they have discovered about the artefact and their plans for the dig site. He plies investigators will cups of tea, freshly baked cakes, sandwiches and even offers to buy them a pint of ale in the pub – anything to get them to satiate his love of old things.

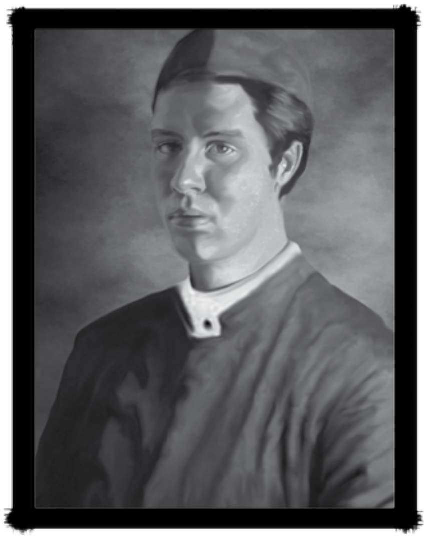
Read or paraphrase the following:

"Well, it was two months ago now. I was walking Pip – that's my dog – around the wood, you know, where you're digging at the moment. Anyways, I was looking out for precious things, you know, like Roman coins and the like – often find them hereabouts – when all of a sudden Pip takes all queer like and begins going at something in the ground. I hurries over, thinking he's got scent of a rabbit or badger, calling 'come away Pip, come away!' I pulls him off and I see that it's no rabbit, but some polished stone sticking out of the ground. I moves the earth around it and gives it a good tug and, lo, it comes free! Well, it was a funny strange thing – no doubt you've seen it for yourselves? Looked like a bat with teeth. I thought this ain't Roman, surely. So I gets Pip and the bat thing and marches back home. I put it on my mantelpiece at first, but I swear the eyes on the thing followed me around the room and right gave me the collywobbles. So I moved it out of sight. Pip didn't like it around, either. After a couple of days, I was due to visit Cambridge to see some old pals of mine, so I decided to take the thing to the university and see if anyone there knew what it was. Well, you know the rest I expect..."

A successful Persuade roll will get Flemming to reveal that, whilst the statuette was in his cottage, he suffered terrible nightmares. These stopped once he had left the artefact with the professors at Cambridge. If asked to describe his nightmares, all he can remember is a "terrible blackness, as if I was lost in some horrible hell."

If the investigators can put up with Flemming's abundance of energy and his ability to get in the way of whatever they are doing, he could be a useful ally.

Middle Harling Church



A pretty, picturesque village church dating from Norman times, beautiful stained glass windows rise over a well-kept graveyard. Inside, through the heavy wooden doors, ancient pews line the central aisle, leading to the chancel where the altar is covered in local flowers.

The local priest, Reverend Robin Sands, is surprisingly young, inexperienced and very approachable. A devout man of God, the reverend has found it difficult fitting in to the local community, his youthful demeanour not sitting particularly well with the aging parishioners. Therefore, apart from Sunday services, he seldom receives visitors and he is extremely excited at the prospect of receiving callers from the dig site. The reverend studied at Cambridge not that long ago and he is keen to hear all the latest news from the university.

Polite and well-meaning investigators should have no trouble in engaging the reverend in discussion about the parish and, if asked, he willing devotes some of his time in assisting the investigators to search through the church records held within the vault underneath the nave – providing a +30% bonus to Library Use rolls.

Reverend Sands has never met Blackstock the poacher, but has heard of him: *"A brute of man I hear, lacking social graces I'm led to understand."* Likewise, the reverend can only provide an overview on the other parishioners, as of yet they still have not *"welcomed me into their hearths and hearts,"* as he says.

Player Handout 6

There are five. Five gaolers charged to guard the place and the Darke. To keep Him in His Darkness eternal. Know these as Vaeyen, the soul stones.

Guardian spirits bound in to the statues of winged demons? Why here?

Came upon strange passage within unknown text dated 1667. Not English – language unsure? Will transpose here as I fear the original manuscript will perish before too long:

Ya na kadishtu nilgh'ri stell-bsna Cyaegha; K'yarnak phlegethor l'ebumna syha'h n'ghft. Ya hai kadishtu ep r'luh-eeh Cyaegha eeh, S'uhn-ngh athg li'hee orr'e syha'h.

– Handwritten notes found tucked inside the journal of Reverend Peter Greap, dated 1842.

Keepers Note on Handout 6

The ritual chant transcribed by Reverend Greap is the *Vach-Viraj Incantation* and can be used to dispel Cyaegha. Chance to learn is INT x 4, 1 POW and 1d6 SAN to cast.

Player Handout 7

My mind is in turmoil, oh woe. My faith must shield me from the Adversary's fires of pain and misery. My worst beliefs are come true! The village is in league with Him – their souls damned to purgatory, no respite shall they have. This very night I bear witness to unholy sights as the pagans danced and swayed in an ungodly manner within the wood, celebrating the heathen practices of the equinox.

Hideous acts of depravity I witnessed, I pray to God that my mind not be fouled with the seed of Satan. Before mine eyes, the miserable wretches cavorted and called forth a black myst that did offend the eye of God. The myst did have a life unto itself! Oh woe is me! A very demone of styx.

My strength leaves me. Where is my Lord? I grow weary. I pray that my Lord will bless me with strength enough to leave this cursed place.

I fear they know and will come soon for me.

– Journal of Reverend George Barsford, dated 23rd September 1667.

In the Vault

Access to the vault is through an iron hinged, oak door in the vestry, beyond which a set of well-worn stone steps leads down into the foundations of the church. Cobwebs festoon the walls, quickly covering any who venture down. For light, the reverend produces two hurricane lanterns that burn with warm orange flame. The steps quickly descend into a vault that lies directly below the nave.

Within the low-ceilinged vault, warped wooden shelves creak under a weight of books, records and mounds of papers. Centuries of parish records are piled atop one another, covered in a deep layer of dust and cobwebs.

A maximum of three people can be in the vault at any one time, due to the limited space. Naturally, no catalogue or index exists for the copious piles of papers, scrolls and tomes strewn about. Searching by hand, with trial and error, would appear to be the investigators only possible option.

For every 1d6 hours of searching, allow a Library Use roll (+30% if the reverend is helping). Each success provides the investigators with one of the following two items (**Player Handouts 6 and 7**).

Conclusions and Rewards

Apply the following rewards to investigators who stand steadfast and save the day:

- Party re-aligns the Vaeyen: +1D10 SAN
- Blackstock killed: +1D4 SAN
- Watson killed: +1D2 SAN
- Successful use of the Vach-Viraj Incantation to dismiss Cyaegha: +1D6 SAN
- Cyaegha is released, rampaging and destroying Middle Harling: –1d20 SAN

Protagonists & Villains

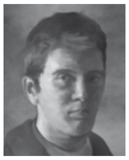
Principle NPCs

Professor Hubert Winstanley

Domineering, eccentric professor of archaeology.

STR 10 DEX 09 INT 17 CON 12
SIZ 15 APP 08 POW 13 EDU 23
SAN 64 Hit Points: 13
Age: 58 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Archaeology 64%, Art (Sculpture) 56%, Credit Rating 46%, History 80%, Library Use 39%, Listen 30%, Other Language – (Arabic 37%, French 37%, German 35%, Greek 63%, Latin 54%, Old English 60%), Persuade 60%, Psychology 20%, Spot Hidden 53%



David Pitman

Postgraduate, devout and sporty student.

STR 14 DEX 17 INT 15 CON 8
SIZ 15 APP 16 POW 07 EDU 20
SAN 35 Hit Points: 12
Age: 22 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Archaeology 35%, Anthropology 20%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 48%, Dodge 41%, Fast Talk 30%, Hunting Knife 32%, Law 20%, Listen 35%, Other Language – (French 52%, Greek 30%, Latin 24%), Psychology 10%, Spot Hidden 26%, Swim 23%, Track 35%, Throw 43%

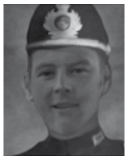
Janet Wilson

Level headed, feisty and courageous.

STR 07 DEX 13 INT 18 CON 14
SIZ 07 APP 14 POW 16 EDU 15
SAN 80 Hit Point: 7
Age: 32 Damage Bonus: –1D4

Skills: Accounting 60%, Archaeology 20%, Credit Rating 26%, Drive Auto 36%, First Aid 54%, French 23%, Geography 35%, Hide 23%, History 29%, Library Use 65%, Persuade 49%, Psychology 14%, Sneak 33%

Village Folk



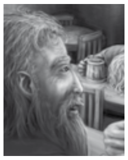
George Cracknell, Police Constable

Affable, well-meaning local bobby.

STR 14 DEX 11 INT 14 CON 14
SIZ 15 APP 12 POW 11 EDU 12
SAN 55 Hit Point: 15
Age: 43 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 26%, Carpentry 46%, Dodge 29%, Drive Cart 36%, Fast Talk 34%, First Aid 54%, Hide 23%, History 29%, Law 23%, Listen 54%, Locksmith 25%, Mechanical Repair 37%, Occult 10%, Persuade 29%, Psychology 18%, Sneak 21%, Spot Hidden 56%, Track 37%

Weapons: Grapple 39%, Truncheon 37% (1D6+1D4)



Bill Travers, Landlord of the Red Lion

Gregarious, sociable and teller of tall tales.

STR 16 DEX 14 INT 14 CON 18
SIZ 16 APP 13 POW 09 EDU 08
SAN 45 Hit Point: 17
Age: 43 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 65%, Conceal 34%, Fast Talk 49%, History 43%, Listen 76%, Locksmith 32%, Mechanical Repair 27%, Occult 37%, Operate Heavy Machinery 34%, Persuade 36%, Psychology 26%, Spot Hidden 31%, Throw 47%

Weapons: Fist 63% (1D3+1D4), Black Jack 46% (1D8+1D4)

Jimmy Dunklin, Farmhand

Hard working and hard drinking.

STR 18 DEX 11 INT 08 CON 17
SIZ 16 APP 13 POW 14 EDU 06
SAN 70 Hit Point: 17
Age: 23 Damage Bonus: +1D6

Skills: Climb 48%, Craft (Animal Husbandry) 32%, Dodge 25%, Fast Talk 27%, First Aid 23%, Jump 37%, Mechanical Repair 47%, Operate Heavy Machinery 39%, Occult 26%, Ride 32%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 30%, Throw 47%, Track 51%.

Weapons: Fist 75% (1D3+1D6), Grapple 40%, 12-gauge Shotgun 42% (4D6/2D6/1D6), Hunting Knife 26% (1D4+2+1D6)

Tom Nasby, Farmer.

Opinionated, quick to anger and sneaky.

STR 16 DEX 15 INT 14 CON 18
SIZ 17 APP 07 POW 08 EDU 06
SAN 40 Hit Point: 18
Age: 39 Damage Bonus: +1D6

Skills: Climb 42%, Craft (Stone Walling) 62%, Dodge 39%, Fast Talk 29%, First Aid 46%, Mechanical Repair 36%, Operate Heavy Machinery 31%, Occult 14%, Ride 21%, Sneak 67%, Spot Hidden 32%, Throw 26%, Track 78%

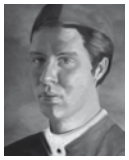
Weapons: Fist 65% (1D3+1D6), Grapple 45%, Kick 43% (1D6+1D6), 12-gauge Shotgun 56% (4D6/2D6/1D6), Hunting Knife 39% (1D4+2+1D6)

John Flemming, Retired, Amateur Archaeologist

Overly friendly with a habit of getting in the way.

STR 09 DEX 10 INT 13 CON 13
SIZ 13 APP 13 POW 12 EDU 10
SAN 60 Hit Point: 13
Age: 64 Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Archaeology 14%, Astronomy 09%, Craft (Wood Carving) 48%, First Aid 39%, History 23%, Listen 52%, Mechanical Repair 64%, Occult 32%, Navigate 29%, Persuade 26%, Shotgun 53%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 64%, Track 72%



Reverend Robin Sands, Vicar.

Youthful, inexperienced and devout.

STR 13 DEX 15 INT 18 CON 15
SIZ 07 APP 14 POW 16 EDU 20
SAN 80 Hit Point: 11
Age: 25 Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Archaeology 9%, Astronomy 13%, Biology 26%, Chemistry 19%, Drive Auto 34%, First Aid 43%, History 26%, Library Use 35%, Listen 32%, Natural History 17%, Navigate 19%, Other Language – (French 13%, Latin 27%, Italian 05%), Persuade 21%, Psychology 59%, Ride 23%

Professor Martin Watson, Possessed Archaeologist

Watson appears normal until the evening of the Autumnal Equinox, at which point his possession by Cyaegha is complete – thick black veins bulge under his pale skin, his eyes turn into soulless black pits and black slime extrudes through his nose and mouth.

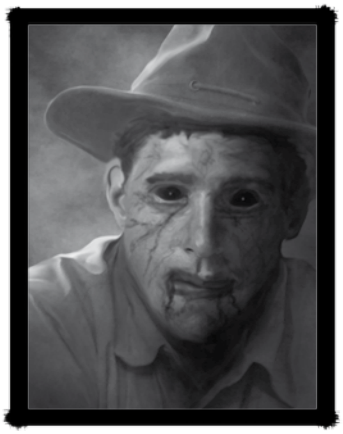
STR 18	DEX 15	INT 18	CON 15
SIZ 08	APP 14	OW 11	EDU 21
SAN 00	Hit Point: 12		
Age: 32	Damage Bonus: +1D4		

Skills: Archaeology 68%, Climb 48%, Hide 67%, History 50%, Mechanical Repair 68%, Occult 34%, Persuade 40%, Physics 20%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 52%, Spot Hidden 32%, Throw 39%, Track 35%

Weapons: Fist 72% (1D3+1D4), Unspeakable Tentacle 60% – when confronted, an oily black tentacle shoots from his mouth, 1D6+1D4 (plus 1D4+1D4 per round until victim succeeds in STR v STR roll to break free)

SAN Loss: 1/1D6 (when his possessed nature becomes apparent)

Special: When Watson is reduced to zero Hit Points he becomes an undead husk animated by the dark power of Cyaegha, his Hit Points reset to 24



Sam Blackstock, Possessed Poacher from Hell

A hulking giant of a man, his hair and beard are long and wild. Black veins spread under translucent skin and his eyes are totally black and alien. Thick black slime drools from his mouth.

STR 18	DEX 16	INT 16	CON 18
SIZ 17	APP 08	POW 13	EDU 04
SAN 00	Hit Point: 18		
Age: 46	Damage Bonus: +1D6		

Skills: Climb 38%, Hide 55%, Sneak 43%, Spot Hidden 30%, Throw 43%, Track 66%

Weapons: Fist 75% (1D3+1D6), Kick 70% (1D6+1D6), Unspeakable Tentacle 60% – when confronted, an oily black tentacle shoots from his mouth, 1D6+1D4 (plus 1D4+1D4 per round until victim succeeds in STR v STR roll to break free)

SAN Loss: 1/1D8

Special: When Watson is reduced to zero Hit Points he becomes an undead husk animated by the dark power of Cyaegha, his Hit Points reset to 36

Cyaegha, Great Old One

A great sickly green eye surrounded by an enormous mass of black tentacles. Cyaegha is the 'personification' of nihilism and has complete contempt for all living things.

STR 80	DEX 14	INT 20	CON 120
SIZ 200	APP –	POW 35	EDU –
Hit Point: 160			

Weapons: Tentacle 100% (8D6)

Armour: none, but takes minimum damage from impaling weapons. When at zero Hit Points, Cyaegha retreats back to its dimension prison of utter darkness

Spells: As the Keepers desires

SAN Loss: 1D10/1D100

Cthulhu Britannica

Wrong Turn

A Near Future Cthulhu Scenario, by John French

When a film crew choose to investigate a derelict radio telescope installation it becomes clear that they have taken a wrong turn in reality. As the darkness draws over them, static hisses on the microphones and ghost images dance before their eyes and they are stranded in the path of cosmic terrors. Can they trust anyone in this cursed place and will any of them make it out alive?

Introduction

Wrong Turn is a short psychological horror scenario for use with *Call of Cthulhu,* intended as a stand-alone game using a closed cast of pre-generated investigators. The scenario is set the first decade of the 21st Century in a deserted location in England. It can be played with between three and six players and will usually take one good evening session to play. No previous knowledge of *Call of Cthulhu* is necessary; however, as *Wrong Turn* rewards a committed spirit on the part of the players, it is recommended for those with a mature attitude to the game.

It is important to note that *Wrong Turn* is very much a death trap, with the investigators largely doomed simply by staying within the bounds of the Lordsdown facility. The game and the enjoyment of a scenario such as this, lays primarily in the unravelling of what is going on, and in perhaps outlasting your fellow players in a game of survival. With this in mind (and mindful of 'benching' players whose investigators are killed off), the scenario also incorporates a method by which lost investigators become part of the unfolding horror itself – until only one is left alive and human.

Keeper's Information

The players take the parts of a 'recce' crew, sent by a media company, to an old radio telescope. Their job is to assess the building as a possible film location. Arriving on a balmy summer afternoon, they are to stay for twenty-four hours in order to fully assess the range of possibilities offered during a full cycle of the day.

The situation that the investigators find themselves in is gradually revealed as the light fails and night comes. Strange sights and noises begin to manifest, building in intensity and strength, whilst corridors open onto other spaces that were never there and 'things' appear on the camera screens, and events from the past return to the present.

The crew are caught in a rotating dimensional lock that will gradually see them dead, one at a time, and the mind of the last perhaps consumed by the horrors that no man was meant to see.

Using the Information Presented

The events of *Wrong Turn* are presented in three phases. In each phase the Keeper is given the broad strokes of what happens and how the game should feel for the players during that period. Keepers are also presented with a few scenes or events that can be integrated into what happens as they see fit. The scenario also contains a strong underlying conceit in order to create its final impact – that of the investigators dying but being replaced with simulacrum that appear to be them but are, in fact, something entirely different. As such, the scenario is presented as a broad set of structures and themes with a single theme underlying its conclusion; it is not proscriptive or replete with detail that must be slavishly adhered to.

It is up to the Keeper to take the information presented here as a canvas and make it work for them and their players. The key work is in extrapolating from the scenario's plot and setup and responding to the actions of the investigators, using the guidelines to further embellish (or, indeed, change), things according to your own imagination and the turn of events during play. In doing this, the Keeper should always feel free to disregard or modify any of the information presented here; it is a script but *you* are the master of the show.

The Use of the Sanity Roll

Aside from a few suggested Sanity Rolls during the early phenomena experienced by the investigators, the particular sanity effect and potential mental damage caused by the increasingly bizarre and unnatural events unfolding at Lordsdown has been left up to the individual Keeper to determine. Lordsdown should be viewed as a slowly corrosive influence that steadily worsens, rather than an abrupt shock to the system. In the closing stages, it is suggested that sanity loss is used sparingly, otherwise the Keeper risks loosing its effectiveness as a dramatic tool.

The Lordsdown Facility

Built to house a large radio telescope array, the Lordsdown facility was completed in 1973. It was billed as a research facility funded as a collaboration of private foundations and companies. The facility came online on 5th June, 1973 and was operational for one night before being shut down and stripped of its array and equipment. On 1st September, 1974, the last personnel left, the gate was locked and the facility was left to rot.

The truth was that Lordsdown was not built with private money but was wholly funded by an agency of the British Government using a series of willing partners and shell organisations to conceal its involvement. Built to very unusual specifications, the facility was far from conventional and was intended to research "cosmic resonances" – a field of research based completely on material from an undisclosed source – with the hope of opening up a new area of physics.

The Lordsdown facility was, unfortunately for all involved, a resounding success, but not in the way envisioned by its creators. Its entire on-site staff went missing without a trace on 5th June, 1974. This mass, and unexplained, disappearance led to the immediate termination of the facility, the stripping down of the project and the decommissioning of the site.

Following decommissioning, Lordsdown was sealed under a 'D-Notice' and a cover story – about its backers going bankrupt – put out to the general press. Because the secret nature of the facility was never on any official record, there was nothing to stop the superficial records of the facility becoming publicly available and, as time passed and administrations changed, Lordsdown's true nature was completely forgotten. Thus, there was nothing preventing this strange and deserted locale being found three decades later by a junior research assistant in the Red Rose Media Company as a potential location for a television program, and nothing to stop a team being dispatched there, entirely ignorant of the place's toxic dangers.

The Shatter Point

The Lordsdown facility, in truth, no longer 'exists' – it is a place lost in time and other dimensions, a place where reality was first breached more than thirty years ago with utterly disastrous consequences. The research paid for by Government money was an overwhelming success; it found the impossible and then punched through it like a child punching through glass. Those within the research facility at the moment of its activation were consumed or cast adrift (in body and mind), in places that man was never meant to survive.

In the aftermath, the Government closed the facility, nailed its doors up and quite deliberately forgot about it, unable and unwilling to confront the truth, no matter how fantastic it might be. However, the rupture created could not be papered over so easily. Slowly and unobserved, the rupture has grown worse down the years, and through these alien spaces Lordsdown shifts and creaks like a ghost ship on a sea of everlasting madness.

The physical fabric that can be seen and touched – the walls, tunnels and buildings of Lordsdown – are now no more real than the painted façade of a film set, able to change in part or as a whole, to become *elsewhere*; any one of a billion other moments and realities that man has never seen and should never see. The Lordsdown facility is simply now no more than a the scab over a wound in reality, a shatter point whose edges move and grind over one another in judders and screams that manifest as living nightmares and terrible ends for those caught within.

As darkness falls, the walls of reality and time bleed as strange and otherworldly phenomena begin to occur with increasing frequency and severity, first threatening and then destroying the investigators, one at a time.

The Red Rose Media Company

The Red Rose Media Company or just "Red Rose", was set up in the late nineties by a successful television producer and backed by private finance. In its early years, it dabbled with producing radio plays for direct release to CD, as well as audio book production, but has, for several years, focused on its core business of producing mainstream popular "bums on seats" television programs, which it sells primarily to British independent and digital TV channels.

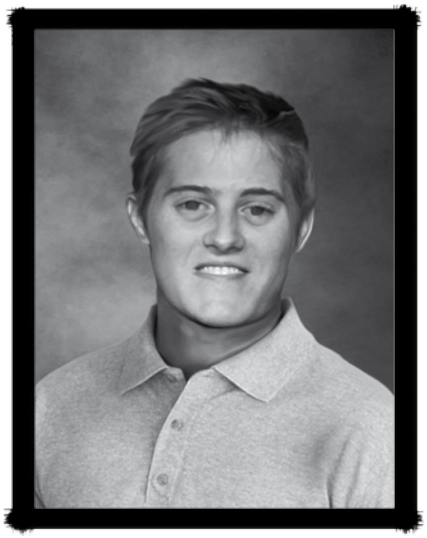
The company's portfolio includes a number of realty shows of varying success, fly-on-the-wall documentaries, and a late night crime drama.

The Moonstone Pilot

Red Rose's latest venture is a modern adaptation of the Wilki Collins' classic, *The Moonstone*. The project to get a two-hour pilot off the ground was given to producer, Simon Court, whose enthusiasm for the venture comes solely from his wish to raise his profile with a big prime time drama. Faithfulness to the original book plays almost no part in Court's plan for the pilot or subsequent series. His interest is based on one word that sounds like money to him – spies. The original text, historical flavour and almost the entire plot have been replaced by well-dressed, good-looking actors in their early twenties, a good dose of violence and the moody and dark-edged atmosphere brought by using numerous derelict locations. By terrible chance, one of the locations that is being considered to lend *The Moonstone* its "cool" and "post-industrial" edge is the Lordsdown radio telescope facility.

The Investigators

There are six investigators in *Wrong Turn* who together to make up the media crew sent to scout Lordsdown as a filming location. All of them can either be player-investigators or non-player investigators (depending on the number of players you have), and any not taken as player-investigators should be ran as NPCs by the Keeper. There are no other investigators in *Wrong Turn,* although others of a similar type could be substituted as desired.

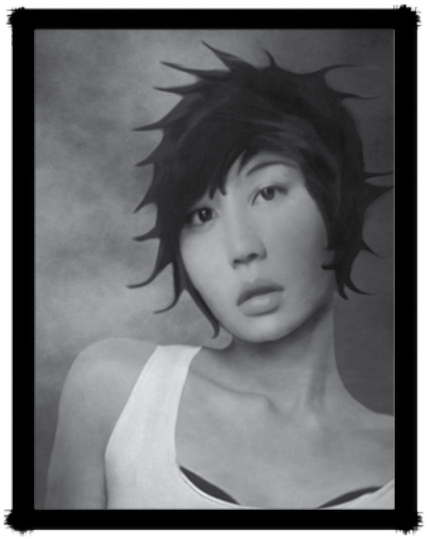


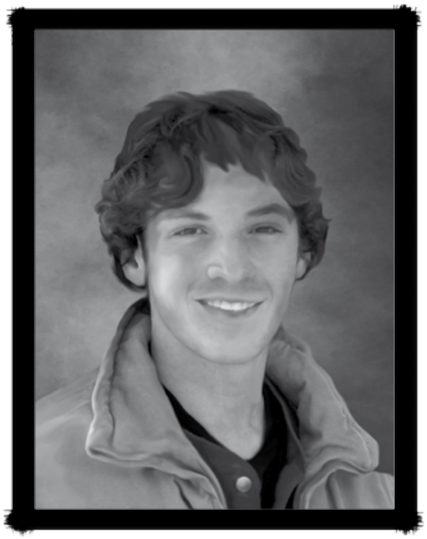
Simon Court
(Producer)

Overbearing, rude and self-important. Simon Court has worked on a few second-string TV programs and feels that this makes him the ultimate professional. He is highly sceptical about anything supernatural.

Niki Wong
(Junior Technician)

Very clever and hard working, Niki has achieved a lot in her educational career. Treated as a general dogsbody by Simon Court, she is ready to quit because of his attitude. Not credulous to the supernatural, she will ask questions rather than dismiss what she experiences.





Michael Vince
(New Junior Technician)

Michael has been trying to break into the media game for years; submitting failed scripts, pilots and ideas. For him, a job as a coffee boy on a production would be a supreme achievement. Today is the first day of his big break. He is excited, eager and enthusiastic. Very open to suggestion, the supernatural has a profound effect on him.

Trevor Green
(Visual Engineer)

Green is a highly experienced professional. A true journeyman of television productions, his knowledge extends beyond cameras and lighting to all technical areas of a shoot. Whilst Green has the cynicism of experience, he is a professional and does his job. The supernatural is something that he does not consider having any views on.

Daniel "Danny" Morris
(Sound Technician)

In his late twenties, Danny is highly competent in his field; the capturing and manipulation of sound. He is, however, lacking in confidence and the discomfort of a night in the Lordsdown facility is not something he relishes.

Katherine Belmarsh
("The Woman from Head Office")

In charge of new program commissioning, Katherine Belmarsh is unconvinced by Simon Court's pitch and has been invited along by him (in the hope that he can "turn her around"), on the scouting of Lordsdown as a location. She is tough and not well disposed to the project. When things start to become strange she blusters at them and desperately attempts to rationalise what is happening.

Vehicles and Kit

The crew have three vehicles: two four-wheel drive people carriers and a van. All are petrol-fuelled and have approximately two thirds of their fuel left.

The van is loaded with: sound equipment, four digital cameras, a camera with night lenses, a steadicam mount, cabling, a petrol-fired generator for power, two jerry cans of petrol, lights, tripods, a well-stocked tool box (including hammers, pry bars, wrenches, two cordless drills and a power driver), as well as two trestle tables and sundry other technical paraphernalia. Crucially, the van also carries two high-powered torches and four gas-fuelled lamps.

Food and overnight kit: The people carriers have some food and drink for the overnight stay, including sandwiches, chocolate, flasks of coffee and tea. Most of the team have brought a few personal items in an overnight bag. The aim of the recce is to assess the Lordsdown facility as a possible location for a night shoot and so sleep is not something that has been planned for. Some accommodation has been made for a quick nap by the inclusion of two sleeping bags and strut-framed camp beds. Each people carrier also has three handheld torches.

Sequence of Events

Wrong Turn is divided into three phases during which the light fails and the nature of the true Lordsdown Facility comes to the surface:

First Phase: Daylight

The crew arrive in late afternoon on a bright summer's day. The Lordsdown facility is clearly isolated; however, at this stage, there is no hint of threat or danger. Any initial exploration of the facility will likely occur now. Nothing unnatural occurs in this phase but description of the inside of the facility may make the investigators uneasy. With the sun still shining, the crew begin to set up their sound kit, cameras and control desk, as well as exploring the facility further.

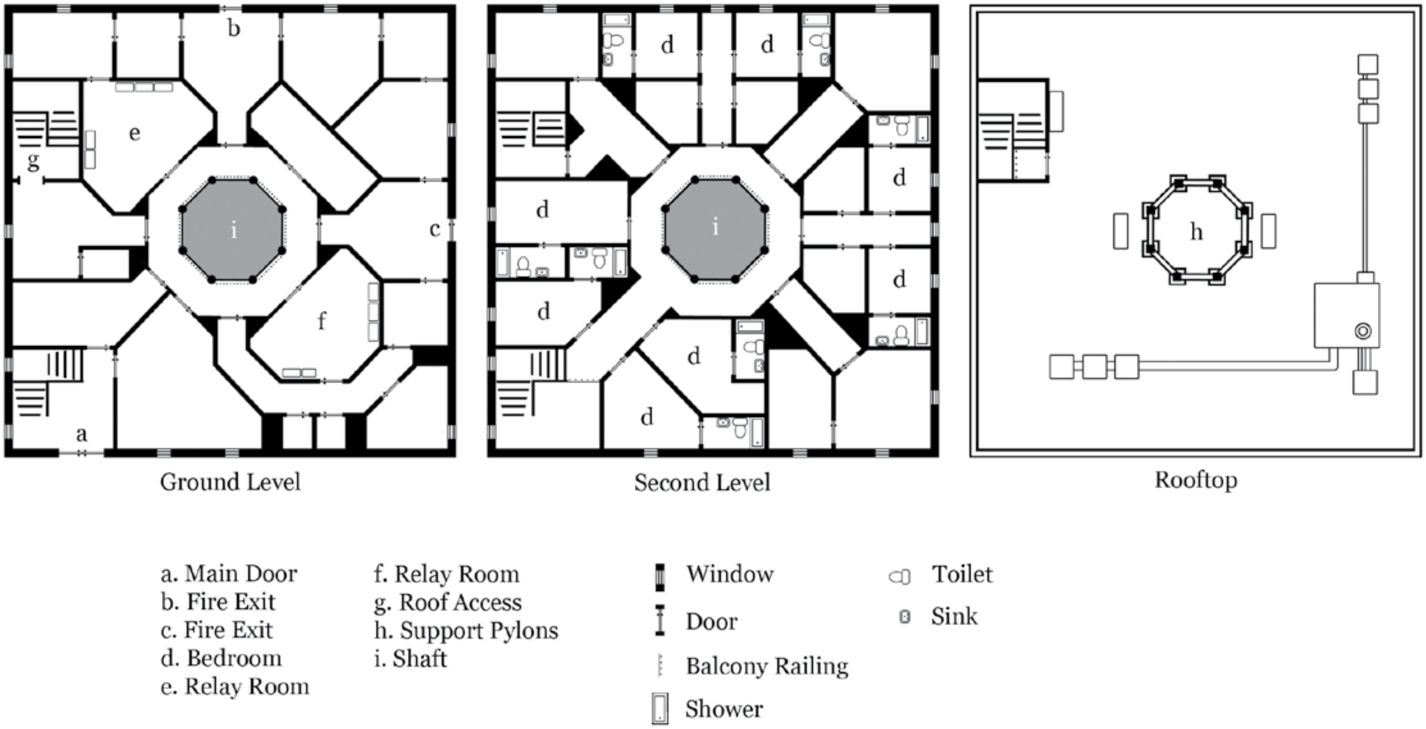
Second Phase: Twilight

As night falls, the crew begin to settle in for a long night of sound checks and moving camera shots. People start to see and hear things: the cameras start to pick up weird images, strange sounds are heard over the microphones and the layout of the facility seems to shift and change.

Final Phase: Darkness

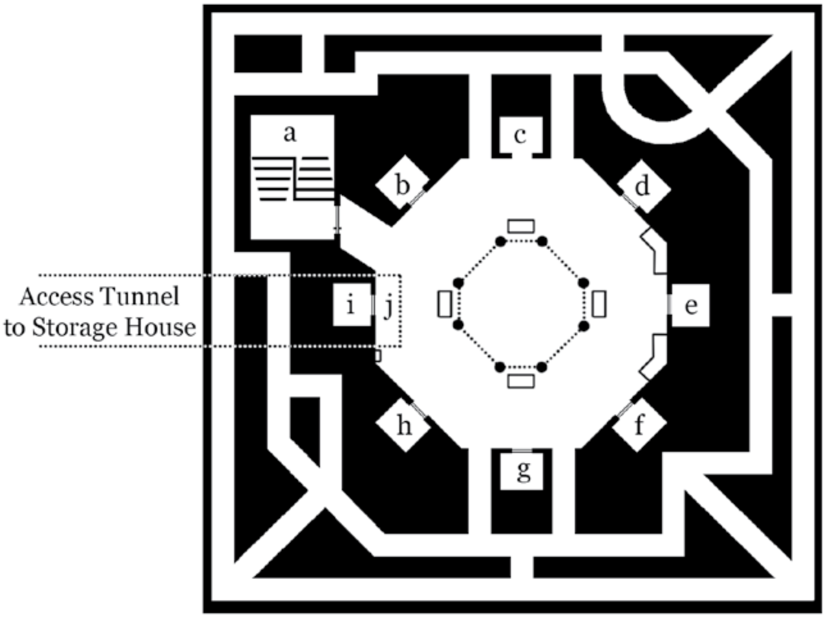
In the dark, things start to go very wrong for the crew. They start to see terrible things: images of their colleagues dead – only to have them appear again alive and well, images of the facility's past return before their eyes. Unbeknown to them, the investigators are being taken, one by one, and replaced by things that look and sound like them but which are something else entirely. At the last, only one is left to realise that they are on their own.

Map One: The Radio Telescope Building


b
e
g
i
c
f
a
Ground Level
d
d
d
d
d
d
i
d
d
d
Second Level
h
Rooftop
a. Main Door
b. Fire Exit
c. Fire Exit
d. Bedroom
e. Relay Room
f. Relay Room
g. Roof Access
h. Support Pylons
i. Shaft
Window
Door
Balcony Railing
Shower
Toilet
Sink

Map Two: The Lordsdown Facility Compound

Radio Building Below Ground


a
b
c
d
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g
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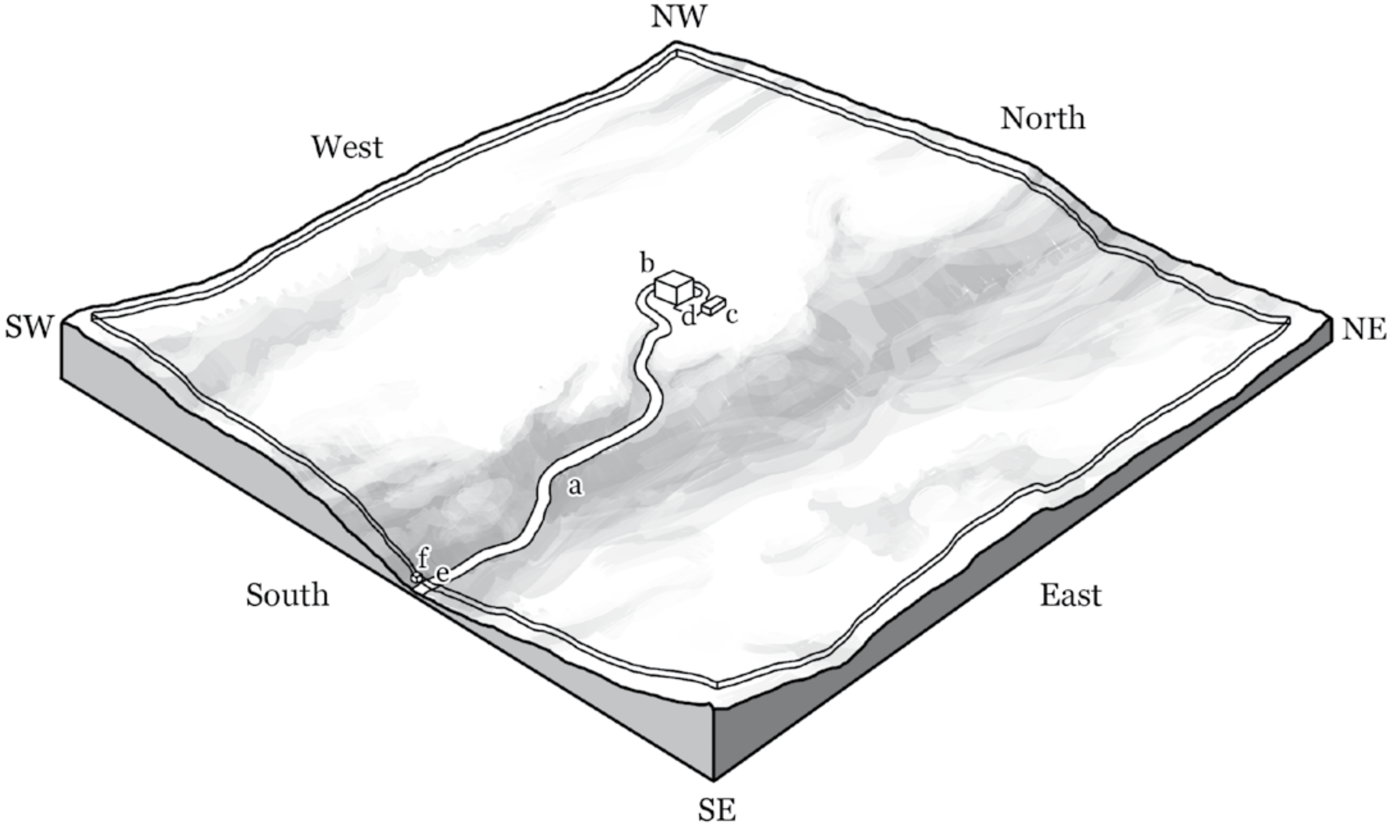
i
j
Access Tunnel to Storage House

a. Stairs to Upper Levels
b - i. Peripheral Chambers
j. Metal Gantry


NW
West
North
SW
NE
South
East
SE
a
b
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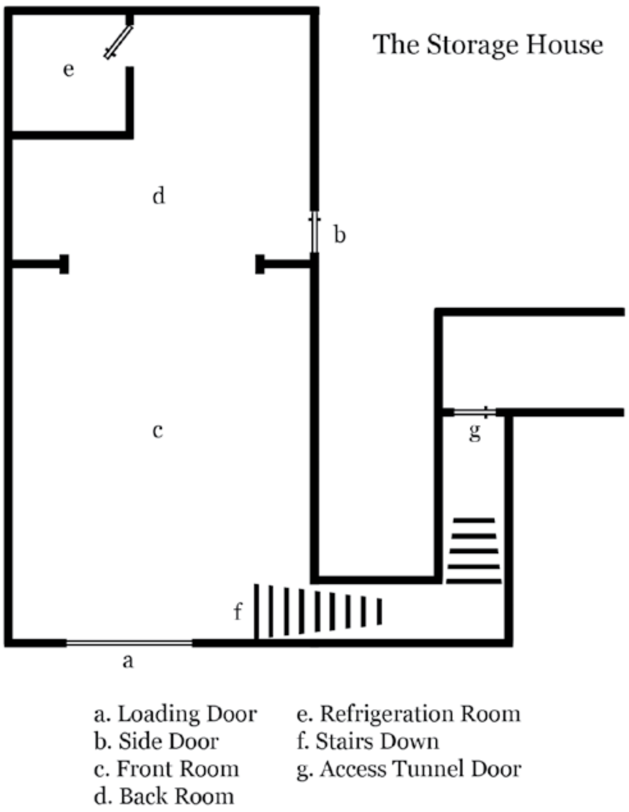
Lordsdown Facility Compound

a. Access Road
b. Radio Building
c. Storage House
d. Car Park
e. Gate
f. Guard House

Map Three: The Storage House



Moving Around The Lordsdown Facility

The Lordsdown facility exists both above and beneath ground – and in other fractured dimensions. While the features of the facility, as experienced by the investigators, change as events progress, the normal physical layout of the facility, both above and below ground, are as follows:

Above Ground

Location and Environs

The Lordsdown facility sits on an expansive rise of chalk that is one of many in the south of Britain. The nearest settlement is the village of Springbourne Gunner, twenty-six miles away to the northwest, while the nearest habitation is Low Farm, seventeen miles to the east.

Undulating and un-wooded terrain extends to the horizon around Lordsdown and the road to the facility is the only established route in and out of the area.

Outer Boundaries and Approach (see the Compound Map on page 70)

The Lordsdown facility is contained by a chain-link fence that loops around it at a distance of three quarters of a mile from the facility's main buildings. There is only one entrance, via a double gate **(e)**, with an attendant guardhouse **(f)**. Now boarded up, the guardhouse has two rooms and contains nothing but debris and dust.

The Compound (see the Compound Map on page 70)

The facility has a single access road **(a),** which circles the old radio telescope building **(b)**.

There are two buildings within the compound: the central two story block that used to be the base of the radio telescope and the long, single story storage house **(c)**. An overgrown car park **(d)** sits in between the main radio telescope building and the storage house. The area around the compound buildings is over grown with tufts of grass and brambles.

The Storage House (see the Storage House Floor Plan on page 71)

A long, low building made of poured concrete; the storage house is slowly rotting away. There are two entrances to the building: a large loading door **(a)** of rusted metal and a locked door **(b)** on the west side. A motor originally operated the loading door, but this equipment has since been removed. The door could be levered up to create a gap at the bottom sufficient to crawl through. The locked door has been weakened by time and the elements and so can be broken down with a little effort. Inside, the building is dived into two large rooms **(c** and **d)**, connected by an open-arched door. The rooms were stripped bare decades ago and contain nothing now but dust and cobwebs. The south-eastern corner of the second storage room contains a dank and rusty refrigeration room **(e),** its door open – inside, it is dripping, foul and empty. The stairs by the north wall in the first room **(f)** lead down to a rusted metal door **(g)** that opens into the tunnel that connects it to the radio telescope building.

The Radio Telescope Building (see the Radio Telescope Building Floor Plan on page 69)

A square block of weathered concrete two stories high, it has a main door **(a)** and two fire exits **(b and c)**.

The windows and doors have had steel mesh nailed over them. Almost every window has been broken and the wind howls through the interior. While light switches and power points remain in place, there is no power in the building. Most of the rooms on both floors were offices or record rooms and have been stripped of their contents, leaving bare boxes with little to indicate the use that they were originally put to. On the second floor, the eight bedrooms **(e)** with accompanying shower rooms can be easily identified but are bare.

On the ground floor, the two technical relay rooms **(f** and **g)** still have equipment in them; however, these are simply the large, grey consoles that house gauges and switches behind grimy glass panels.

Access to the roof, and the rusting support frame that held the large array, is via stairs from the first floor **(h)** – the door at the top of the stairs is secured by bolts on the inside. The roof is a wide flat area of heavily reinforced concrete. The traverse and main load bearing pylons **(i)** that supported the dish of the large array are still in place and are covered with orange rust. The power relay boxes are still in place but are empty, having been stripped of all electronics and cabling. At the centre of the radio telescope building is an eight-sided shaft **(j)** that opens onto all floors and extends the full height of the building. The internal structure of the building centred on this eight-sided shaft is decidedly non-standard.

Below Ground

Much of the Lordsdown facility extends below the ground in a series of chambers beneath the radio telescope building, and in a series of tunnels that extend beneath the compound. These subterranean areas are part of the non-standard design of the Lordsdown facility and its use in researching "cosmic resonances". These subterranean parts of Lordsdown are shown on the **Subterranean Map** on page 70).

The Central Control Area

At the base of the eight-sided central shaft in the radio telescope building are the remains of the array's control consol and the other equipment used in the facility's research. It is open to the shaft and so can be looked into from the landings of the two floors above ground.

The floor of the central control area is five meters below ground level and accessed by stairs **(a)** from the upper levels. Much of the equipment has been removed; however, the locating lugs (set into the floor), can still be seen. The equipment that does remain is badly corroded: metal boxes showing indicator dials, some with unusual scales, and things that are defiantly not standard scientific units. As in the rest of the facility, there is no power and all of the equipment is dead.

The Peripheral Chambers

There are eight chambers that open off from the central control area – one per wall of the eight internal walls of the central shaft. All are identical in layout: a small cube-shaped chamber, no more than two meters in each dimension, lined with white tiles that also cover the floor and ceiling. A small drain hole sits in the centre of the floor. Light fittings are set flush to the centre of each wall and into the ceiling. Each chamber is accessed by a single door that is made of steel, hung from a reinforced doorframe. An observation eyehole is set into each door. All the doors have key locks that drive three heavy bolts from the door into the frame. Two chambers **(b** and **d)** are locked and (without a light source) nothing can be seen through the eyehole in the door. One chamber **(c)** has no door, all the rest **(e, f, g, h** and **i)** have open doors.

The Symmetrical Tunnels

Four narrow arches lead off from the central control area, between the peripheral chambers. Beyond these arches are narrow tunnels that connect to a square of tunnels that surround the facility below ground. The tunnels are all just a meter wide, two meters high and ovoid in cross section. All the tunnels are lined with what seems to be cables and pipes encased in vulcanised rubber sheaths. As with the rest of the facility, the lights set into the ceiling do not work.

Access Tunnel

The access tunnel from the storage house is a concrete-lined tube, two meters in diameter. It does not connect to the symmetrical tunnels but, instead, joins the central control area half way between its floor and the ground floor landing. It is accessed from a metal gantry that is connected to the floor of the control area, and from the ground floor landing by metal hoops imbedded in the wall.

Words to the Keeper: How to Control the Collusion of the Players

Making *Wrong Turn* work hinges on getting the players to conspire with you. You are, after all, secretly killing all but one investigator during the course of the scenario and, importantly, getting the players of these investigators to carry on 'appearing' to play the same character. The final and terrible truth is that from the first moment that the investigators are out of each other's sight, they are dying one by one and their places taken by something else – so that, at the last moment, only one investigator is left to realise that they are alone in a terrifying cosmos.

The following devices may help when dealing with this central conceit though, of course, the Keeper should feel free to follow their own judgement:

Playing cards to mark those who will be taken: Deal a playing card to each player before you begin play. Explain to them that they may not look at their card yet. Of the cards dealt out, all but one should be black and one red – one player receives a red card and all the other players receive a black card. The player with the red card will be the final survivor; all the other players (those with black cards) will die one by one and be replaced by simulacra.

Suborning a player to your design: Once you are into the third phase (night time) of *Wrong Turn* you can ask to see their card when removing 'true' investigators and replacing them. If the card is black, explain that their investigator is now dead and that they are now playing something that seems human in everyway – *but is not*! They should continue to play their character as they would normally. If the player's card is red, simply run through an event or description just for them.

The final revelation: At the end of the game, when you are revealing the truth, ask the player with the red card to reveal their card. As you describe the climax of the scenario (see Alone in Predatory Cosmos on page 85), you can ask the other players to (one by one) reveal their cards.

First Phase: Daylight

The first phase of *Wrong Turn* takes place in the bright sunlight of a summer's day. In this phase the crew arrive, explore the facility and get set up for the test shots and sound tests.

This phase is very much about setting the scene, familiarisation and lulling the investigators into a sense of comfortable normality that can then be shaken during the second phase and broken in the third phase.

Player Introduction

Before you begin play, tell the players about the Lordsdown recce, Red Rose Media and why the events of *Wrong Turn* begin with them all arriving at a disused radio telescope in the middle of the Southdowns in England. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You all work for the Red Rose Media, a company that makes television entertainment programs that are sold to independent and digital channels. You are all going on an overnight recce of a potential location for an upcoming drama based on the classic novel, The Moonstone. The drama is only going to be loosely based on the original book and the producer wants it to feature a modern and edgy look.

The potential location is an old radio telescope installation called Lordsdown. The project is the baby of one of Red Rose's senior producers, Simon Court, who is coming on the recce and who is also bringing a member of the company's senior management team with him – head of new program commissioning, Katherine Belmarsh. Simon has told you to get set up before dark so that you may work together during the night, testing out camera shots, lighting, sound balance and the like. You are also to run some footage through a night vision camera as he wants to use night vision in the production because it looks 'cool'. He says that he wants a thorough job done and some good footage to use in working up the possibilities for the location in the script. Once the sun rises, you can pack up the kit and go home to bed.

The Atmosphere and Flavour of The First Phase: Daylight

The atmosphere, in and around the facility, changes from reassuringly normal (if empty and forlorn) to terrifying and unpredictable as the darkness draws in. The Keeper should aim to create this atmosphere and control how it changes by the sights sounds and smells that are described to the players. The first phase should not have an atmosphere of overt threat or malignancy, though individual features of the facility may seem sinister when first described.

Outside

The first phase takes place in daylight and, during this time, the outside of the facility should feel pleasant and comforting. In describing the features outside of the facility buildings, the Keeper should try to create the impression of the pleasant atmosphere of a summer's day in the countryside. The atmosphere should be light and balmy; the weather is beautiful with a clear blue sky, whilst a light warm wind stirs the scent of grass and wild flowers.

Inside the Buildings

The atmosphere inside the buildings is one of disuse and neglect; the insides having been stripped of anything that could provide a clue as to what the different parts of the building were once used for. The inside is gloomy with no light other than the natural sunlight filtering through the grimy widows that run down the corridors. A mouldy (but not foul) smell pervades the buildings, suggesting long disuse and rot. Paint and wallpaper are peeling away from concrete, rust seeps from fixtures, covering anything made of metal. The air feels damp and cool inside the buildings. Interestingly, there are no signs of insects or other vermin inside the radio telescope building (e.g. no cobwebs, no rat droppings).

Arrival at Lordsdown

Keeper's Essentials

- It is late in the afternoon of a warm and glossy day of English summertime.
- The crew are in three vehicles: two people carriers and a van.
- Simon Court is in the lead people carrier with Katherine Belmarsh as a passenger.
- The second carrier is driven by Trevor Green with Niki Wong as a passenger.
- The van is driven by Danny with Michael Vince as a passenger.
- They have been driving since mid-morning and left the main road over an hour ago.
- The gate is secured by a chain and padlock; Simon Court has the key.

Scene Details and Description

The crew arrive by road at the Lordsdown facility on a beautiful day. They are driving two to a vehicle, with Simon Court driving in the lead and the van at the rear. To set the scene paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The summer light is still bright and strong when you crest a hill and see the sun-soaked building amidst the rich green of grass fields. The vehicles jolt along the uneven road, whose high verges are thick with lush leaves and the wings of butterflies and the smell of high summer washes in through the open windows. It takes a few minutes to reach the double gates, their slumped frames closed by a rusted chain. Beside the gate sits an empty building, its green paint peeling and its windows shut with mould-stained boards. Beyond, the road leads towards a great square building, its flat roof spiked with rusted forks of metal where once a great dish must have been held, aimed at the stars.

This scene is simply an opportunity for players to talk to each other and poke around the gatehouse. For the Keeper, it is an opportunity to establish the tone and atmosphere of this first phase of *Wrong Turn*.

Once the investigators decide to get through the gates, describe the initial details of the radio telescope building and storage house as they drive up to them. Give this initial scene a generous amount of time, even though little seems to happen. The trick is to establish the right atmosphere and the important details of the physical location that the investigators will be moving around in. Ensure that the players have time to 'settle' into their characters. All these things make the later phases more enjoyable for all.

Exploration of the Facility

During this scene, the investigators move around the Lordsdown facility, discovering things about its physical features. This could blur into the next scene (see **Setting Up** on page 76), as different investigators may do different things and it is possible that they may start setting up their equipment straight away, only to look around the facility at a later stage – if this happens, simply move between this scene and **Setting Up**, as required.

The Features of the Facility

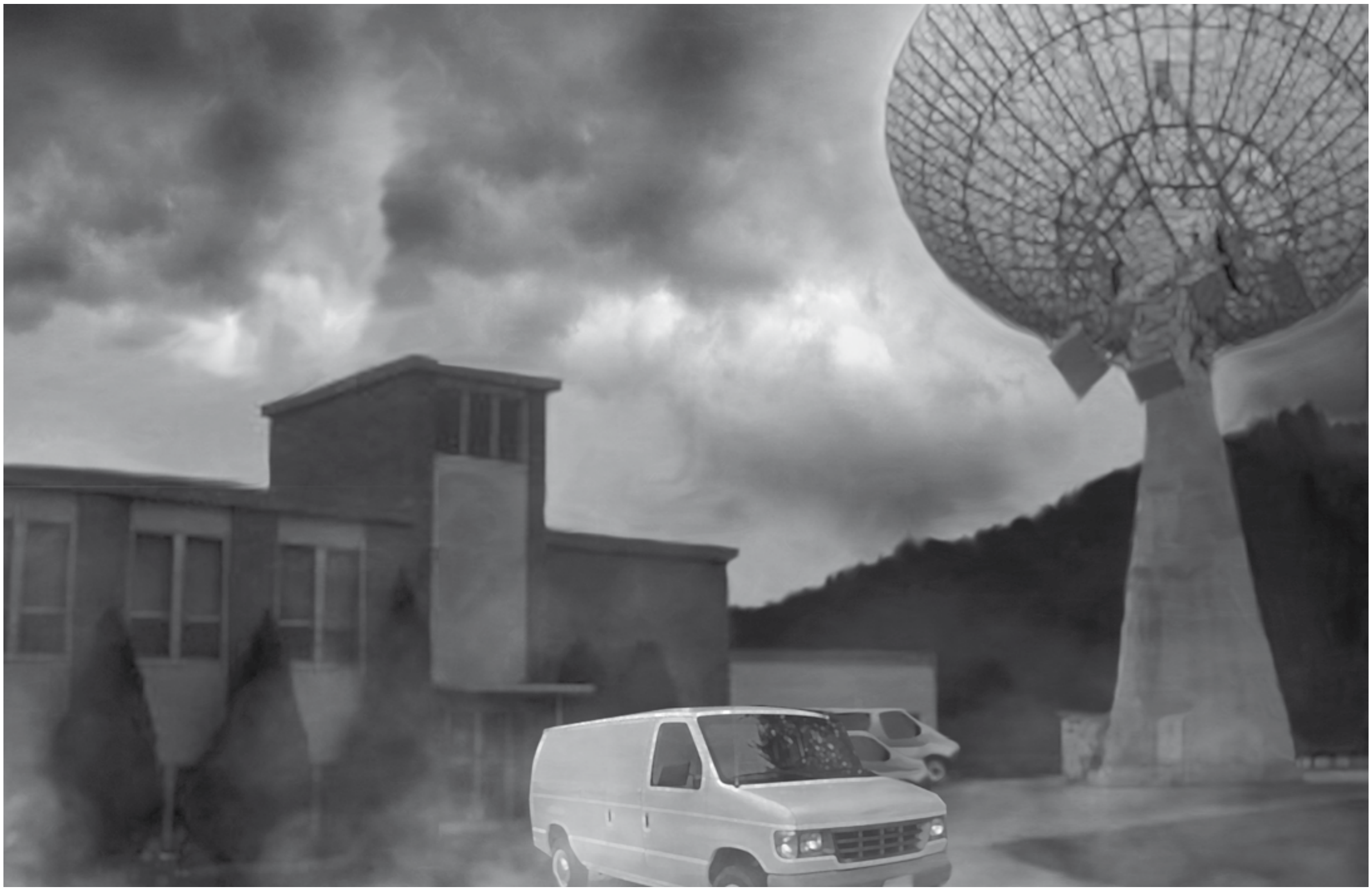
As the investigators move around exploring, use the details of the physical features and layout found in **Moving Around the Lordsdown Facility** on pages 71 to 72. Note that none of the investigators have a plan of the facility, though Niki Wong (who researched the facility records) knows that there are supposed to be two buildings in the compound and that there are large internal spaces and tunnels – though no other details.

If the investigators are spending time looking at every detail (as described in **Moving Around the Lordsdown Facility** on page 71), descriptions should be given without the need for skill rolls, but if they are only fleetingly examining rooms, it is suggested that appropriate use of Spot Hidden or Listen rolls are used to resolve whether they notice the small details.

The Central Control Area and Shaft

Keeper's Essentials

- None of the investigators have a map or plan of the inside of the facility.
- Niki Wong knows that there are only two buildings.
- There are three high-power torches in the van and several small torches in the other vehicles.



Scene Details and Description

The crucial episode in this scene is when one or more investigators enter the central area of the radio telescope building and look into the shaft with the central control area at the bottom of it. When this event occurs read or paraphrase the following:

A large space opens in front of you, extending above and plunging below. Light, straining down corridors from distant windows, gives you an impression of many walls of smooth material. No windows open into this space and it seems to span both floors of the building, as well as to below the ground. The depths are almost lightless; however, you get the impression of angular lumps and darker spaces that could be doors.

If any investigator goes down to the central control area, read or paraphrase the following:

In the gloom, you can see a wide, smooth floor. As you step across it, fine dust puffs into the air. Angular shapes rise from the floor without coherent pattern while, above, the octagonal shaft rises up to what must be the ceiling of the building. All around the walls there are dark openings that gape like waiting mouths.

Setting Up

Keeper's Essentials

- Guidance on what they would do to set up and prep for location tests have to be given to Trevor Green and Danny.
- A central control panel is set up indoors wherever they decide to set up the petrol generator.
- The technical set up goes smoothly with all equipment functioning well; clear pictures and sound from the cameras and microphones.
- If they start promptly, the technical setup should be complete by the time it starts to get dark.
- Cameras and microphones are wireless and send signals back to be reviewed on laptops.

Scene Details and Description

The crew will, at some stage, need to start setting up for the tests of sound and night filming – after all, that is what they are here for. As noted, it may be that the investigators actually start setting up while they are exploring the facility or may delay setting up until later. If this does happen, simply use the details that follow. If, however, the investigators 'forget' what they are supposed to be here for, prompt the players who are playing Simon Court and Trevor Green, as both should have a strong desire to get the job done; Court because he wants to appear sharp in front of Katherine Belmarsh and Green because he is a professional who has come to do a job and wants to get it done.

The Technical Aspects

When the investigators are considering how and where to set up, the Keeper may have to give guidance on where and how they would set up their kit. In brief, it would be usual to set up a control desk on trestle tables indoors. The control desk (run off the generator) has the two laptop computers set up and connected to microphones and cameras around the location (or being carried by the crew). As there is no other power, the chargers for all mobile equipment and lights also have to be run off the generator. With so much electrical equipment, they are certainly going to want to set up indoors on order to protect it all from rain – it is England, after all.

The technical parts of the set up go smoothly; the computers are up and running, remote cameras and microphones provide clean, hard signals with clear images and sound. If they start within an hour of arrival, they will have completed their set up by the time it starts to become dark.

Once set up, the laptops are used to capture the pictures from all of the cameras and the sounds from the microphones. The microphones and cameras are wireless but may be connected to the laptops by cable. Both the sound and images may be viewed and heard as they are captured on the screens of the laptops. Usually in this kind of setup someone stays with the control desk.

Test Shooting

The primary area of interest for filming is probably the interior of the radio telescope building and possibly the roof with the rusting pylons that once supported the dish, as these give the kind of dramatic shots that Court might want. The technical assessment of any of these areas for future filming do not take that long and professionals like Green and Danny take no more than half an hour of note-making, a quick testing of sound returns and a few shots from different angels for reference. Of course, Simon Court might want other things that are less efficient or usefully technical...

Second Phase: Twilight

The second phase takes place as the light fails and the Lordsdown facility enters a twilight world that might not be our own. In this phase, the first indications that all is not well begin to appear. This phase is about putting the investigators off-balance and injecting elements of tension. The events outlined are encounters that the Keeper can integrate into the investigator's actions: they are not a strict sequence of events, but simply outlines of occurrences that fit in with the tone of this phase of the scenario. The Keeper can and should invent their own unsettling episodes to fit in with the actions of the investigators.

Pale Figure in the Half Light

Keeper's Essentials

- Outside, a pale and indistinct figure is seen.
- Those looking at it have the sense that it is not facing them.
- In a blink it feels as if it is facing them and moving very quickly towards them though drawing no closer.
- The figure does not respond to words or gestures and is then gone as if it was never there. It vanishes if approached.

Scene Details and Description

One of the early phenomena the investigators encounter is that of a pale and disturbing figure seen in the failing light. This event occurs only outside of the buildings or for investigators looking outside from a door or window, and should not happen to every character that looks outside; however, it may occur with variation more than once.

The Atmosphere and Flavour of The Second Phase: Twilight

The atmosphere of this second phase is that of transition, in which the world of the game tips from the normal and familiar into the threatening and fearful. The changes to what is described in terms of sights, sounds, smells and sensations should mirror the natural changes of it becoming darker, and the unnatural change that is occurring as the facility tilts and dips into other darker places. Every so often there should be something that is not quite right in terms of how the world works.

Outside

The second phase occurs as the daylight flees and twilight arrives. Outside, the light fails slowly, the sky darkening and the sun disappears in a spectacular sunset. Once the sun has gone, the light takes on an almost tinted hue, visibility reduces distant objects to vague forms and a layer of mist rises from the ground all around and hovers just below knee-level. There is also complete silence outside, apart from any sounds that the investigators cause themselves – no sounds of birds or animals and no wind. The silence should feel abnormal and oppressive. The investigators are isolated. No moon or stars appear in the sky.

Inside the Buildings

As the daylight disappears and the exterior grows quiet, the inside of Lordsdown stirs. When inside the buildings, everything that the investigators look at that is not directly in light seems vague and uncertain, and as if it could be something else. Sounds occasionally behave strangely: a noise from a completely different part of the building might sound as if it were just behind them, or the voice of the person in the same room might echo as if far away. On occasion, things can be heard skittering along in the dark, out of sight.

The most effective moment to use this scene is when an investigator is otherwise occupied or who is just generally looking around: for example, just after watching the sunset or retrieving something from one of the vehicles. When the moment is right, read or paraphrase the following:

In the half-light, the world seems both drained of colour and bruised by deep shadows. As you look out across the soft layer of mist that hides the ground, you see something.

Something at the edge of sight where the visible bleeds into darkness. It seems pale and soft, as if the mist that lies across the ground has risen into the air and taken shape. The shape appears to be a human figure, though you cannot make out any features and you are struck by the certainty that there is something profoundly wrong, even frightening about it. As you stare, you have the feeling that it is facing away from you. You blink and have the sudden feeling that it is now looking straight at you and that it is moving very fast towards you, though drawing no closer.

Should the investigators call or wave to the figure it does not respond and after a few moments it is gone, leaving the viewer doubting their own senses. Viewing the figure costs 0/1D3 SAN.

Ghosts on the Wire

Keeper's Essentials

- Electrical equipment begins to malfunction in strange and inconsistent ways.
- Strange things are seen on cameras, picture feeds and on microphones.
- The things seen via camera lenses and heard via microphone that seem not to be there, in fact, are.

Scene Details and Description

Up to a point, all electrical equipment and technology (including the sound and visual equipment), brought to the Lordsdown Facility by the Red Rose team has functioned perfectly. As night falls the equipment begins to occasionally malfunction. The exact details and times when the equipment malfunctions is up to the Keeper; however, some possibilities include:

- Power packs draining in seconds and then suddenly being fully charged.
- Mobile phones ringing and, when answered, only scratches and mumbles are heard.
- Images on the cameras or control desk laptops become broken and jerky.
- Sounds picked up by microphones begin to repeat and overlay each other.

The follow events can be used at any time during the second phase. Alternatively, use them as inspiration for events of your own devising.

A Face in the Static

This event can occur at any point during the second phase when an investigator is looking at one of the control desk laptops. Read or paraphrase the following:

The picture on the laptop fills with static. As you look at it you can see the distorted reflection of your face on the screen's surface. The static becomes more intense and for a moment it seems that what you took to be a reflection of your face seems to turn, as if looking around. The screen blinks and you are again looking at the clear image from one of the camera feeds.

If checked, the equipment is found to be in perfect working order and there are no obvious causes for the image seen.

Murmurs out of sight

This event can be used when an investigator is listening to the feed from one or more of the microphones. These are constantly feeding back and playing aloud from the control desk laptops, so it could occur at any time when someone is alone at the control desk. Read or paraphrase the following:

You hear the sounds of others moving around the building at a distance: the scrape of a boot on rough concrete, the sound of breathing as someone passes close to one of the microphone stands, voices talking softly and a voice that speaks loudly and clearly:

"Bring the power into balance across all eight. Is the array aligned?"

And then more quietly:

"Are you hearing me?"

When checked, the sound is registered as coming from a specific microphone set up in a location of the Keeper's choice. It can be a room that other investigators were in or not. Taken with other phenomena, this steady erosion of normality is worth a loss of 0/1D4 SAN.

The Camera Sees What the Eye Cannot

There is a single constant that runs through *Wrong Turn* from the second phase onwards: There are things going on around the investigators that they cannot always hear, feel or see, but the camera lenses and microphones do see and hear these things. When a character looks into a camera lenses or views an image taken by a camera, they are able to see things that their mundane eyes may not. Likewise, whilst their ears hear nothing, the microphone records the sounds of something moving around and tapping at the edges of reality.

We See You

The following event can be used when an investigator looks through the viewfinder of their camera at any point during the second phase. If possible, it is more effective to have this event occur when the character has already looked into their viewfinder one or twice and seen only what they should. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you look at the image, it wavers for a second and then resolves. There are figures in front of the camera, figures in bulging, yellow hazard suits. They are bending to lift something that you cannot see. They stop as if at a noise and straighten up, then begin to turn towards you. Behind them on the ground, you are unable to see what they were lifting… but for a moment, when you think you can see a bare hand.

If, at any point, the investigator looks away from the camera picture and checks the reality with their naked eye, they see no sign of the figures. However, when they look back in the camera they see:

The figures are standing still, facing you. Their faces covered by old gasmasks. Behind the circular eyepieces you can make out shining eyes, as if they were in a picture caught by a flash bulb. Suddenly, the picture breaks up into pixels and as it does so, for a split second you see something move behind the figures, something that fills you with dread.

The pixilation of the picture only lasts for a second and, once it has gone, the picture from the camera is of what the character can see with their naked eye.

Out of Place

By the time they are getting into the second phase of ***Wrong Turn***, the players should be getting familiar with the layout of the Lordsdown Facility and the placement of things within it – where the control desk is set up, where Danny has put the microphones and so on. As the facility falls into twilight, the fixed nature of physical objects becomes unstuck. The investigators have experiences that make them question the physical nature of the Lordsdown Facility and which also provide clues as to the malign truth that lurks beneath its surface: a place of fractures, nightmares and things that thirst for a human face to wear and a voice to speak with.

Note that the sense of things moving around and being out of place should not be overwhelming (yet), but can be slipped in, occasionally, as the investigators move about the facility. Some ways of creating this sense of things being out of place are:

- Once the sky starts to darken, have the investigators make Idea rolls to realise that there are no stars in the sky.
- Coming back into a location where they have just been, the investigators find that everything within has been moved about.
- The physical location of rooms and corridors changes without reason.

In addition to any ideas you have for touches of disjointed space in this second phase, you may also want to use the two following events:

Turned Back on Oneself

This event can be used when investigators are moving around the facility. It is best used more than once on different investigators in order to create the feeling of being sucked into one place. The central control room is at the heart of the fractured reality of Lordsdown and, as such, draws investigators to it. The investigators walk out of a door from one part of the facility to another only to find that they have stepped out of a door on to one of the landings overlooking the central control area. They may even find that they have walked out of the mouth of one of the tunnels leading off the central control area.

I am sure they were open...

This event can be used when the investigators are in the central control area or when they have a view to the walls of the central control area (if they are shining a torch down into the central control area from one of the landings above, for example). Read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a low sound, like metal moving on metal, and a metallic click, like a lock being turned. As you look around, you can see nothing moving nor any sign of change in the control area. It is only as you glance around again that you see what has changed. You look again and count: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight metal doors set into the eight walls of the room, all closed. Only two were close before and one was without a door.

The doors are locked and the view through the eyehole in each of the doors reveals only darkness. Once the investigator who experienced this event leaves, the doors return to their open state again should they or anyone else enter the central control area again.

Final Phase: Darkness

With the fall of night, the Lordsdown Facility moves from a place of strange events to a place of madness and death. In this phase, terrible and horrific events begin to engulf the investigators – they are killed one by one and replaced with simulacra until there is only one living person left to realise that they are alone in a place of nightmares. The events described in this section focus on the key things that need to happen in this climatic phase; they contain suggestions and guidance on how to make these crucial things work during play. Being the final phase, the scenario is wrapped up during this phase – the last event, **All Alone in a Predatory Cosmos** (page 85), is the finishing line you are aiming for throughout this phase.

How to Replace Investigators with Simulacra

Throughout this final phase, you should pick off investigators when they are separated from at least one other truly living character (not a simulacrum of an investigator who has been killed and replaced), they are, in turn, killed and replaced by a simulacrum of the investigator played by the same player. The advice that follows provides advice on how to handle replacing individual investigators and how the death of a character fits into the events of ***Wrong Turn***.

What if they try to leave Lordsdown?

As the investigators are exposed to more and more of the strangeness of the Lordsdown Facility, it may be that one or more of the players decides that the *only* thing that their character would do is leave Lordsdown. While they are, of course, right to flee what is coming, absent players don't make for fun games!

Lordsdown is a deliberately isolated location. It is a considerable distance from habitation, settlements and other people of any kind. Once it starts to become dark and the game has entered its second phase, it is also isolated in a more profound and unnatural way – it is no longer part of the physical world and so there is no escape! This means that the Keeper can keep the investigators within the bounds of the facility and make the inability to escape a vital element of the atmosphere and game.

The only way for investigators to try to leave the Lordsdown facility is by driving back along the road they arrived on (or on foot). The following are methods that the Keeper can employ to handle an investigator trying to leave though, of course, you should feel free to think of your own:

Malfunction

If the investigator tries to use one of the vehicles to drive out, have it malfunction – after all technology has been doing strange things since it began to get dark. The vehicles might not start or might die as soon as they have moved a few feet, while inexplicably the radio turns on and starts hissing. Examining the engine might reveal it to be strangely corroded or aged to the point of worthlessness.

And You Return

Whether it is on foot or by vehicle, the investigator finds that they keep returning to Lordsdown from the point where they left it. No matter how far or fast they try to go, they return again and again. Investigators will probably be infuriated and shocked, and so such events are likely worth a Sanity Roll (0/1D4).

Kill Them and Replace Them

The simplest option is to have the investigator leave, be consumed and replaced by a simulacrum, which can then return with a story of how they left and why they decided to come back. This option does move the replacement of real investigators with simulacra forwards in the course of events, but as only you, as Keeper, know this it does not matter. If the investigator who leaves is the one with the red playing card (and is destined to not be replaced), then you cannot use this option and will have to use one of the other options or one of your own devising.

Exactly how quickly the investigators are replaced with simulacra is up to the Keeper. If you want it to progress rapidly, you can always kill and replace a character every time an investigator is alone. Following these rules usually sees the final revelation for the last remaining character come around after a relatively short time. If you need this point to be reached even more quickly, you can pick-off pairs of investigators if they are isolated from the rest of the crew.

The point at which an investigator is 'killed-off' in this manner must be carefully handled as the cooperation of the player must be gained, as they are asked to secretly continue playing a version of their character. Some points that you might find helpful when dealing with this situation follow:

Go Out of Earshot

Because you are bringing the player 'in' on the game and need to keep what is going on secret, it is best to go through what has happened with them away from the other players. Go out of the room or away from the hearing of the other players.

Check the Colour of the Card

Do not forget to check the colour of the player's playing card – if it is red then you should describe another event to them and not swap their character with a simulacrum.

Describe what has happened to the Investigator

Describe the character's death to the player or simply state that they are dead and they know no more. It is likely that they will have questions on how the simulacrum they are now playing will behave and what it is. For details and options of what the answers to these questions are see the **What Wears my Face?** (page 83). If there are already other investigator that have been replaced you may reveal who they are.

The Atmosphere and Flavour of The Final Phase: Darkness

The pervading atmosphere of the final phase is that of terror in an environment that shifts and changes as if driven by the nightmares of a lunatic. Things are no longer familiar, nor do they make sense and if they do, it is only a momentary respite. This phase should also focus on physical darkness and the sensations of fear and mystery that wandering about in strange dark places can bring.

Death and Blood

In relating the violence and death, try to avoid gaudy overblown descriptions in favour of terms that utilise of all the senses in order to create the sensation horror and revulsion. Blood is dark and glossy if fresh, dark and ruddy as it starts to dry. The smell of death and blood should be described as a clawing smell of meat, tinged with the smell of urine and faeces. Dead things are also very, very still.

Outside

The third and final phase takes place once true darkness has fallen. After this point, it is pitch black outside: no stars and no moon can be seen in the sky. Unless an investigator is shining a light directly at what they are looking at, objects and features of the compound cannot be seen. A character without a light is not able to see their hand in front of their face. There is no wind or any sound other than that created by investigators. A character that is still and quiet for more than a few seconds can detect a faint, high, constant note – like the sound made by vibrating glass or a gong when struck lightly.

Inside the Buildings

The inside of the buildings is a place of paradox and madness. The interiors are totally dark if there is no source of light – the old lights and electrical systems turn on for brief periods of time, even though they are not connected to any power source. There is a constant low hum of electrical equipment and the air feels warm and slightly moist. Ozone can, occasionally, be smelled. The layout of the rooms and passages above and below ground shifts and changes as though they are constantly reorganising themselves. Sounds of movements and whispered voices can be heard from 'just' around the corner. The predatory forces at work within the facility are personified by figures in hazard suits and gas masks, whose limbs move with a jerky and unnatural motion.

Keep it Secret

It is very important that you make sure that the players of investigators who have been replaced *do not* let on what has happened to the other players.

I Just Saw You Die

Keeper's Essentials

- The investigators are killed and replaced by simulacra.
- The remains of the killed investigators should later be found or their death witnessed in some way.

Scene Details and Description

When an investigator dies, their death should be witnessed or (more likely), their body found later. How and when a character dies may vary depending on the decisions made by the players and the Keeper should consider the following events as 'ready made' methods of achieving the desired effect – use these and develop further events in order to ensure all but one investigator remains at the end.

The Thing Behind You

This event can be used when an investigator is on their own, but who is 'in shot' of one of the cameras. It could even be used if there are just two investigators on their own, with one of them filming. The footage of this death does not need to be live – it can have occurred while no one was watching and be played back later (when someone who looks like the person being killed is right there next to the people watching...). When the footage of the victim is being viewed, read or paraphrase the following:

They turn, looking around. They take a step forward and in the space behind them there is a figure standing completely still, its body encased in a hazard suit and its face hidden by a gas mask. The thing is right where the person is looking and yet they do not seem to have seen it. The image judders and jumps, and as it does the figures moves – its limbs moving jerkily in rhythm with the distortion.

The image becomes distorted with static and when it returns to normal, the figure is right behind (name of investigator). Jerking and juddering, it raises its hands and the image dissolves into pixilation, when it returns you can see the figure dragging something away into the darkness.

The Chamber

This scene can be used at any point when truly *living* investigators are in the main control area. Two of the peripheral chambers that lead off from the central control area have stayed firmly shut to the investigators: one of them is now going to open and reveal the fate of one of the investigators. You should decide on a character that you have already replaced with a simulacrum to be the remains found in the chamber. When the conditions are right, read or paraphrase the following:

There is a sound of metal hitting metal, like the single dull tolling of a bell. All the lights come on in the peripheral chambers, revealing their gleaming tiled insides. You hear a nose like water trickling down a bath plughole. The sound is low, but you can hear it clearly. There is a low click like a latch being raised and one of the sealed doors opens a crack.

As you approach, it there is a thick smell of meat, of sugar and of dung. Blood is running down the tiled walls from the now opened chamber and running into the drain in the centre of the floor. On the floor are pieces of a person, an arm, half a head and a dozen other chunks of flesh looking like meat butchered into portions by a cleaver. It is only from the clothes that you realise who it is.

If the investigators leave the central control area, when they return the lights in the peripheral chambers are no longer lit and the chamber that contained the remains is shut and locked again.

What Wears my Face?

'What' takes the place of investigators once they are killed is not proscribed – it could be any of a number of malign entities or effects created by the chaotic realities that boil around the hole in realty that exists where the Lordsdown Facility once was. Three possibilities are presented here; however, Keepers should feel free to modify these or ignore them and determine for themselves what is walking around Lordsdown wearing the faces of the dead.

Something Else

An alien entity from a place beyond human understanding has been drawn to the shatter point that was created within the Lordsdown Facility. Like sharks drawn to bloody water, it has come to feed on flesh and fear. Taking the form of its prey merely adds to the quality of the feast.

A Force of the Unnatural

It is not an entity that has taken the form of the dead but rather a force resulting from the splintering realities that collide and grind over one another in this place. The simulacra are phantoms spun of memories and paradox and no more exist than does a dream.

The After Image of the Dead

The simulacra are the after images of those who have been killed in this place. These 'images' persist through the differing facets of reality that have splintered and broken due to the Landsdown experiment. Like a footprint on the shoreline before the tide comes in, they are a memory of what is dead and gone.

How the Simulacra Behave

The simulacra behaves broadly as their original investigators did – they do not suddenly go on a murderous rampage, but may well change in how they respond to what is going on. They may even try to lure individual investigators away from the remaining living investigators. Most importantly, however, the simulacrum is a character that is controlled by the player. It is a *different* character that just appears like the character they were originally playing. It is advisable to talk to the player once you have switched their character for a simulacrum about how they are going to play it.

The Past Remade

Keeper's Essentials

- The time leading up to the facility going operational for the first and only time manifests itself to the players as experiences of the locations they are in during those times.
- These experiences give hints and clues to the players about what happened at Lordsdown.

Scene Details and Description

As Lordsdown slips into the darkest hours of the night, it slips further into places and times beyond human understanding. The moment that created the shatter point drifts back into being like a picture coming back into focus. What this means is that the investigators experience brief flashes of the events leading up to the station coming online for its first and only experiment into 'cosmic resonances'. This also allows the Keeper to give information and hints about what has caused the conditions that the investigators are experiencing. The two events presented here provide an idea and flavour that can be used to create others as needed.

The Array is coming on line...

When the investigators are in the central control area, or are looking into it, read or paraphrase the following:

There is a flare of blinding light and you have to close your eyes. When you open them, you see that the control area is no longer empty or disused: banks of machines gleam with newness, people move amongst them, consulting readouts and reviewing the data that spews from chattering printers. A man wearing glasses walks right past you without acknowledging that he can even see you. He stops to talk in low tones with a woman in a white hazard suit. Nodding as if satisfied, he straightens himself and speaks in a clear voice:

"Well done, everyone. We are ready to bring the array online. Bring the power up, slowly."

The machines begin to hum. Paper begins to chatter faster and faster, spewing from the printers. All around the room screams erupt from behind the eight sealed doors. You can hear the noise of fists beating against metal. The man in glasses is looking at a reading on one of the consoles, his face is grey, his eyes wild:

"Oh god, oh god! Bring the power down, BRING IT BACK DOWN!"

There is a sudden wet explosion from behind one of the eight sealed doors. The screaming from behind the others grows louder and louder.

"No. No!" shouts the man and you realise he is pointing at you. There is a flare of bright light and the room is dark and empty again.

Meat for the Chambers

This event can be used in any of the other areas of the radio telescope building. Read or paraphrase the following:

There is a lurch in the pit of your stomach and the walls around you are suddenly lit with fresh clear light. The paint is no longer peeling, but crisp and pristine. A few feet in front of you, two figures in white hazard suits and are leaning over a naked figure on a steel gurney, their gas masks hanging from loops at their wastes.

"Subject seven sedation holding," says one and, as she turns away from the supine figure, you can see that she is holding a small pen torch.

"We'll have to get him into the chamber now. It will not last for more than twenty minutes and I don't want to re-dose him or he will not be conscious." The woman walks to one and of the gurney and disengages its wheel break.

"They need to be conscious?" asks the other, looking down at the naked figure.

"Oh yes, they need to be fully conscious. At least, that is what I am told."

There is another lurch and the brightness and light is gone, along with the figures.

All Alone in a Predatory Cosmos

Wrong Turn ends when there is only one investigator left truly alive. At this point, it is time for them to realise that they are all alone, that the others with them are dead and are, in fact, *something* else. The falsehoods of what they have experienced and the chaos that now crowds around them is revealed as their ties to the "real" are stripped away. The 'other' investigators that stand next to the 'last' investigator are now revealed to be no more than another lie of a predatory cosmos. This is the crushing climax of horror in ***Wrong Turn*** and it is up to the Keeper how and when the truth is revealed. While a method of achieving this moment is suggested in the following text, it is advised that the climax is adapted to fit the circumstances that have emerged in your game.

How the end point emerges depends on how events have unfolded in your game, some ideas that might be applicable follow:

One by one they fade out of existence

In this ending, at a moment when all the investigators are gathered in one place, each simulacra character is replaced by a hollow shadow, their eyes shining silver like a cat's eyes reflecting moonlight. As you describe this, each player reveals their card in turn.

And then there was one

Here, the simulacra investigators simply disappear from the facility one by one. The last investigator goes into another room and when he or she returns, the others are simply not there. The last character is simply left alone in the dark with the sounds of strange things moving on the edge of sight.

The game does end abruptly once the fate of the investigators is revealed, Keepers may find that the following epilogue rounds the game off and gives a sense of completeness.

However, the true fate of all those involved is for you to decide.

Epilogue

If you are of a literary mind, close the game by reading the following text:

The sun rises, pouring its light over the dew soaked ground. Beneath the fresh sun the two buildings of Lordsdown sit in peace. Inside, a van parked amongst the lush grass, a phone begins to ring. It rings as the sun rises higher. A hand opens the door and scoops up the ringing phone. It presses a button on the phone and raises the phone to its ear:

"Hello... Yes, I can speak... Yes, I am quite alone."

Cthulhu Britannica

King

A Contemporary Call of Cthulhu Scenario, by Keary Birch

In the kingdom of the blind, the one eyed man is king.

Wherein the investigators awake to find themselves in dire peril in strangely familiar surroundings.

Introduction

King is designed for a group of four to six investigators and can be played in a single gaming session (ideally, late at night). The scenario greatly differs from many *Call of Cthulhu* adventures as it is intended to be more of a visceral experience, akin to contemporary horror cinema, rather than a traditional investigation.

The premise of the scenario centres on the fact that the investigators have been physically altered, unwittingly experimented upon by an evil and mysterious 'doctor'. The 'alterations' are somewhat difficult, if not impossible, to reverse and, therefore, it is suggested that the adventure forms a one-off session – perhaps forming a characterful interlude between other scenarios or a campaign. Six pre-generated investigators have been provided and can be found in **Appendix I.IV.**

Whilst ***King*** is based in the current day it could easily be adapted to work in the classic 1920 or gaslight periods. Keepers planning to change the setting should particularly focus on the explanations given by Dr. Funikoshi as these are predominantly based upon modern medical understanding.

Keeper's Information

The diminutive Dr. Funikoshi Tenaka is an outstanding surgeon, a leading specialist in both opthalmologisms and plastic surgery. However, his background is even more 'outstanding' as he is a Miri-nigri – a member of the servitor race who worships and carries out the 'work' of the Great Old One, Chaugnar Faugn. Abandoned whilst a young child by his parents and found by missionaries in the jungles of Thailand, Funikoshi was adopted and raised in England, where he excelled at school and university, going on to achieved professional success as a doctor of medicine. However, during the last few years, his heritage has caught up with him and his mythos-tainted blood has led him back to his ancestral roots. This, combined with his medical knowledge and his ability to peer beyond the realm of the mundane, has culminated in a series of horrific and unnatural experiments.

Dr. Funikoshi dreams of improving people, which some might applaud if they were not aware of how he defines 'improvement'. Indeed, Dr. Funikoshi's improvements are of the altogether more twisted variety as he arranges for a group of individuals (sometimes former patients of his, sometimes strangers), to be kidnapped and brought to him for 'adjustment'.

Some time ago, Dr. Funikoshi concluded that he could not progress his great work any further without some form of assistance. Through a great deal of detective work in tracing his ancestry back to Thailand, he managed to find and contact a group of people who were more than happy to serve (and ask no questions); namely, a small clan of Tcho-Tchos who were living in the very area where he had originally been found by the missionaries all those years ago. Transporting the Tcho-Tchos back to England and setting them up in his secret lair, the doctor now has the help that he was seeking. The Tcho-Tchos perform the dirty work of kidnapping groups of people for experimentation and disposing of failed experiments (should the need arrive), as well as outwardly acting as security guards and hospital porters. To maintain the Tcho-Tcho's compliance to his plans, the doctor has allowed them to summoned and bind a Star Vampire so that they can properly continue their heretical religious rites and twisted ceremonies.

Through years of blackmail, theft and other less wholesome activities, the doctor has amassed a personal fortune that has allowed him to donate huge sums to the construction of Bethesda Hospital – a private hospital in Leatherhead, Surrey. Apart from the professional freedom such acts had brought him, the doctor (through foul magics) beguiled and paid-off the construction workers to build him a secret lair and laboratory underneath the hospital, allowing him to switch between his public and secret work with relative ease.

Foul Experimentation

Doctor Funikoshi has performed a series of dire experimental and mythos-inspired medical procedures upon all of the investigators.

Each investigator has had their eyes 'improved', to use the terminology of the doctor. This procedure involved an operation (the injection of a mysterious and unknown-to-science serum), and the implantation of extra-dimensional 'worms' within the bandages. Whilst the scenario starts with the investigators eyes covered in bandages (including the implanted 'worms'), should they remove the eye bandages, they notice that any pre-existing eye complaint that they had has now gone. Initially, this may please the investigators, but the full consequences of the procedure does not become apparent until they find themselves in a dark place with little to no light. The combination of the serum and the secretions of the 'worms' has not only cured the investigator's original ailments, but has also imbued their eyes with the ability to see in the dark – when this does become apparent, call for a SAN roll (1/1D4). An additional side effect of the operation also allows the investigators to see invisible Mythos entities – with the resulting SAN loss!

Worse still, they have also been 'improved' physically in a second operation that has removed most of their internal organs, replacing them with 'other' things. A painless, open wound or 'slit' now exists in each of the investigator's lower chests (the solar plexus). This wound does not heal. Should an investigator be brave enough to insert their fingers or hand into the opening, they feel a number of cold, wet 'mushroom-shaped things' that somehow just don't feel right, and when they remove their hand, it is covered in cold green slime (SAN roll, 1D4/1D8).

Note that as the investigators are wearing open-back hospital gowns, they will not discover the slit-like wound unless they specifically state they are looking under their gowns or if they remove their gowns at some point during the course of events.

The staff and patients at the hospital are completely unaware of what is transpiring below their feet. The private nature of the hospital also provides added security; there is no accident and emergency ward to bring in 'unannounced' patients, police or other authorities that might accidentally wander where they should not. The front doors are locked at night and the regular medical and administrative staff are paid enough to not ask any questions; only Dr. Funikoshi and his team of Tcho-Tcho hospital porters and security guards really know what is going on…

Initial Set Up

Each of the investigators is an outpatient in the care of Doctor Funikoshi Tenaka at the new Bethesda Hospital in Leatherhead, Surrey.

All of the investigators have undergone minor surgery for a variety of eye complaints, including corneal edema, dry eye, allergic conjunctivitis, presbyopia, tearing and eyelid problems. However, after leaving the hospital (during the course of their outpatient treatment), the investigators have been kidnapped by Funikoshi's Tcho-Tcho minions, drugged and placed in a secret medical ward under the main hospital where the doctor has performed

H2
AMBULANCE
AMBULANCE

further, more vile operations upon them whilst unconscious.

The scenario starts with the investigators waking from 'sleep', tied down to hospital beds and with no memory of how they came to be here – see **Scene 1: Recovery Room**.

Scene 1 – Recovery Room (1)

Scene Essentials

- Investigates awake, restrained and 'blind'.
- A nurse offers nutrition.
- Doctor Funikoshi presents the situation.
- A scream breaks the silence.

Scene Details and Description

It is seven o'clock in the morning – although none of the investigators know this.

All of the investigators are lying face down on some sort of bed. Their heads are held up by a firm, circular cushion of some kind, whilst their hands are level with their heads, restrained by medical restraints. Indeed, wrists, ankles and forehead are all held by Velcro restraints, ensuring that they do not move from their current position.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You are lying face down on something soft. Your eyes closed. A faint smell of disinfectant lingers in the air and you can hear a soft humming sound… of a fan (?)

Beneath you, you feel the crispness of fresh sheets. You are comfortably warm.

Give the players a moment to think about this and then read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You open your eyes. Darkness. Total darkness.

You hear the rattle of a trolley moving closer, a slight change in air pressure and the noise of a door being opened.

"Good morning," comes a female voice, sounding youthful, yet professional. There's a smell of perfume, which is quickly overpowered by the smell of burnt toast. "Have some breakfast," say the female voice. "I'm afraid it's just the usual, orange juice and toast. You can't have anything more substantial until the doctor gives you the once over."

You hear the sound of furniture moving – perhaps a small table, and the squeaking of metal underneath your face. You flinch as something plastic is pushed into your mouth, past your dry lips – a straw? Tentatively taking a sip, you feel the sweet taste of orange juice in your mouth.

The nurse goes round to each investigator in turn and helps them to take a drink and a bite of buttered toast – don't forget to check who accepts the drink and meal.

All the while, the nurse is friendly yet distant. If asked any questions, she 'reminds' them that they have undergone surgery for their eye complaint – but only very basic information and she doesn't give her name nor indeed their whereabouts. Investigators making successful Psychology rolls feel that she is sympathetic, yet she is frightened and definitely holding information back. If pressed by the investigators, the nurse begins to say:

"Look, I don't know what's going on…"

The noise of a door opening cuts her off in mid-sentence. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

There is another change in air pressure and you hear a door open and close. A male voice, with a distinct far eastern accent can be heard.

"Good morning, everyone. I hope you had a comfortable night."

The man seems to shift about the room as his voice grows and diminishes in volume as he moves around each of you. He appears to be stopping at each bed and picks up something, making "hmmm, yes," noises – perhaps studying your medical charts?

"Yes, all quite good. Each of your eye procedures have gone very well," the man says, somewhat smugly. "Now, you need to rest for another twenty-four hours. I'm afraid we can't have you moving around as it may cause complications, hence the restraints. Yes, face down and no exposure to light. We don't want any of that! None of you would like to have any disastrous complications, eh?! Don't want anybody going blind!"

Should any of the investigators ask about what exactly has been 'done' to them, the doctor (Funikoshi), says the following – paraphrase accordingly:

"You have each had laser and intrusive surgical vision correction – eye surgery for the treatment of myopia, hyperopia and astigmatism. Yes, diabetic retinopathy, vitreous haemorrhage, haemolytic glaucoma, central vein occlusion, macular holes or tears and other retinal detachment disorders. It's called vitrectomy, a special surgical procedure that removes the vitreous – the jelly-like fluid inside your eyeballs – so that I could repair the damaged portion of your eye. Once the defect was repaired, I then replaced the emptied eye cavity with a gas bubble. Since gas rises and the macula and retina are at the back of the eye, you must remain face down in order for the gas bubble to apply pressure to the area in need of healing. And so, allow the macula or retina to re-bond to the eye wall and a new vitreous to replace the gas bubble."

He goes on:

"Although vitrectomy has a strong, successful track record in improving vision, the recovery from it is often far more challenging as patients must put up with the discomfort of being held in a face-down, post-operative position for a further twenty fours hours. As I said, we don't want you going blind!"

After a cursory examination of each of the patients (taking their pulse, checking the eye dressings), the doctor pronounces that he is happy with everyone's progress. As he leaves, he says that the nurse shall return shortly, should they require anything further.

The investigators are now left to their own devices for a while. Encourage the players to interact and talk to one another as they fit.

After a few minutes – just enough time so that the players don't get restless – a terrible (female) scream is heard from somewhere close to, yet outside the room, followed by the sound of someone running. A strange, high-pitched, twittering sound seems to appear from nowhere. More screaming can be heard and a male voice shouting something in a foreign tongue, and more footsteps. Some sort of sucking or swishing noise seems to rise in volume. Then, after what seems like a minute, there is silence.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

The key aim of the opening scene is to put the players on edge. Depending on how much your players trust you, one way of starting the scenario is to have all of the players sat around the gaming table blindfolded. Depriving players of their sight in this way is good method of creating suspense and a mood of unease that echoes the situation in the actual scenario. During play testing, the Keeper would not allow players to remove the blindfolds until their actual investigators did so.

Whether the players are blindfolded or not, a sense of uncertainty and unease can be accomplished if the Keeper is able to walk around the table behind the players. Stopping directly behind a player every so often in order to present some information, or perhaps play the part of the nurse and whispering into the player's ear.

Scene II – Recovery Room (1)

Scene Essentials

- Nothing happens until the investigators take it upon themselves to escape their bonds.
- A decision must be taken: keep the wriggling bandages on or remove them?

Scene Details and Description

Dr Funikoshi, fearing that the nurse is having second thoughts and planning to help the investigators to escape, calls the Tcho-Tchos and their 'pet' Star Vampire to deal with the nurse. The horrific, invisible creature appears through the 'lift' doors and kills the unfortunate nurse. However, before it finishes feeding (and also discovers a room full of tasty-looking investigators) the monster is called-off by the Tcho-Tchos and the doctor – all of whom exit by the 'lift'.

Can't Escape?

Whilst the majority of the pre-generated investigators have at least a 50% chance to escape the bed restraints, it remains a possibility that all could fail their STR rolls – even with a re-roll. In this situation, let the investigators 'stew' for a while in the silence and play on their feelings of helplessness, anger and isolation. Hours pass in game time, allowing them further chances to break free.

For the investigators, all they know (so far) is that after the sounds of screaming and running footsteps there is only silence. The investigators are restrained in their beds and alone in the room – they remain this way until they decide to do something about it.

Breaking free of the bed restraints is a STR roll versus a Resistance of STR 10. Should initial attempts fail, allow the investigator to 'catch their breath' and make re-rolls.

Ensure that whoever breaks free first remembers what the doctor said about the potential for damage to their eyes by moving about.

Should one or more of the investigators examine their eye bandages (by touching them), they are in for a shock – the bandages wriggle when touched! Call for a SAN roll (0/1D4).

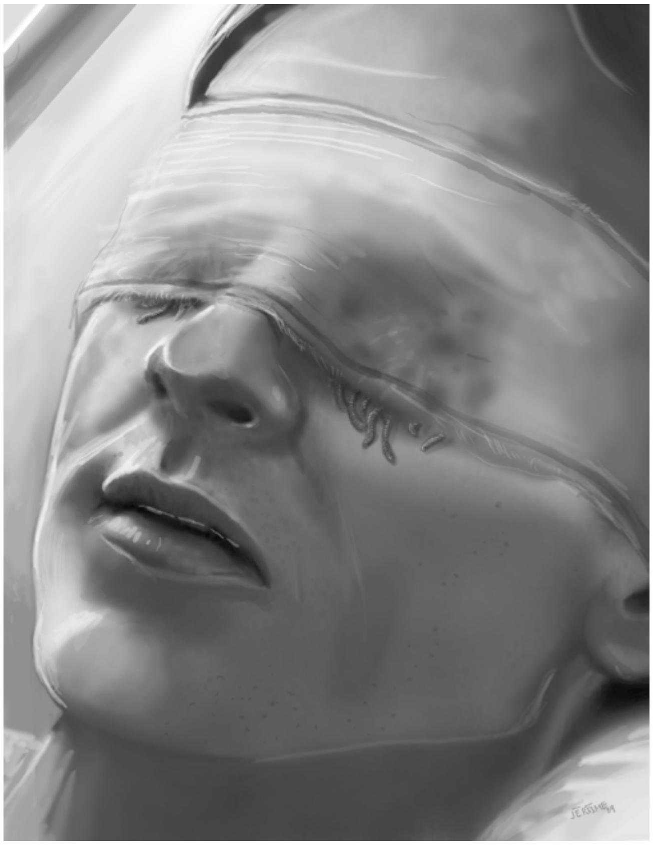
Once removed and examined, the bandages are seen to be infested by small purple worms (perhaps an investigator has to remove a worm from under their eye lid, too), which eventually dissipate in the light, leaving a greasy smear on the otherwise clean bandages.

Apart from the shock of finding worms in their bandages that also 'melt' when exposed to light, the investigators might be pleased to realise they can see and that their eyeballs have, so far, not dropped out or exploded. *Presumably, they are going to be ok…?*

Suggestions for Running the Scene

The decision to remove the bandages is a big one, given that the doctor warned against doing so –"*Don't want you going blind!*" Ensure, by checking at least two or three times that the player wishes for his or her investigator to do so. Play up the tension as you describe the investigator unwrapping the bandages, the wriggling and feeling of small, soft 'things' falling down their face as the bandages come off (the worms falling out).

If your players are actually wearing blindfolds up until this point, now is the time that they can remove them (if their characters do so).



Scene III – Recovery Room (1)

Scene Essentials

- Hospital room with six beds.
- Very cold.
- No clothes, just hospital gowns – although dressing gowns can be found in the bedside cabinets.
- False ceiling and false window.
- The door is the only escape route.

Scene Details and Description

Examining themselves further, each investigator finds that they are wearing a tied, open-backed hospital gown and nothing else. A bar-coded plastic wristband is affixed to their left wrist.

The room is very cold, the concrete floor icy to the touch.

The room contains six hospital beds (if there are less than six players, then the extra beds are made up, but have no occupants), each with a small bedside cabinet that contains clean toiletry items (kidney bowls, plastic urine bottle, bed pan, white towel and a white dressing gown – both of these have a label stitched into them saying '*PROPERTY OF BETHESDA HOSPITAL*'). At the head of each bed is an adjustable metal table on which are the remains of their breakfast.

A single door provides the only exit and inset into the upper half of the door is a circular, smoked-glass window.

Inset into the wall is a window – daylight shines from around the edges of a rolled-down Venetian blind. If examined, the 'daylight' is actually just two strip lights affixed to a recess in the wall, thus giving the appearance of a window. Behind the strip lights is a blank, white, painted brick wall. The ceiling is a panelled suspended ceiling – should any ingenious investigators look above the false ceiling, they discover a six inch high space above the ceiling tiles, and above this is a concrete ceiling.

The walls in the room (as are all in the ward), are made of plasterboard covered concrete blocks – behind these are earth and rock (the whole complex is underground – very ingenious investigators, with the appropriate tools, could feasibly 'tunnel' through the walls and surrounding earth, but such action would take some considerable time!

Pretty soon it becomes apparent that their only route of escape is through the door.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Allow the investigators time to adjust to their situation, they will probably be asking lots of questions and trying to figure out just what is going on. The relationships between the investigators may begin to play a role in the scenario, as alliances or divisions are potentially formed.

Emphasize the chill of the room, the cold concrete floor and the lack of any heating. The dressing gowns in the bedside cabinets provide some relief from the cold, although the lack of slippers or other footwear means that their feet start to feel like blocks of ice.

Scene IV – The Corridor

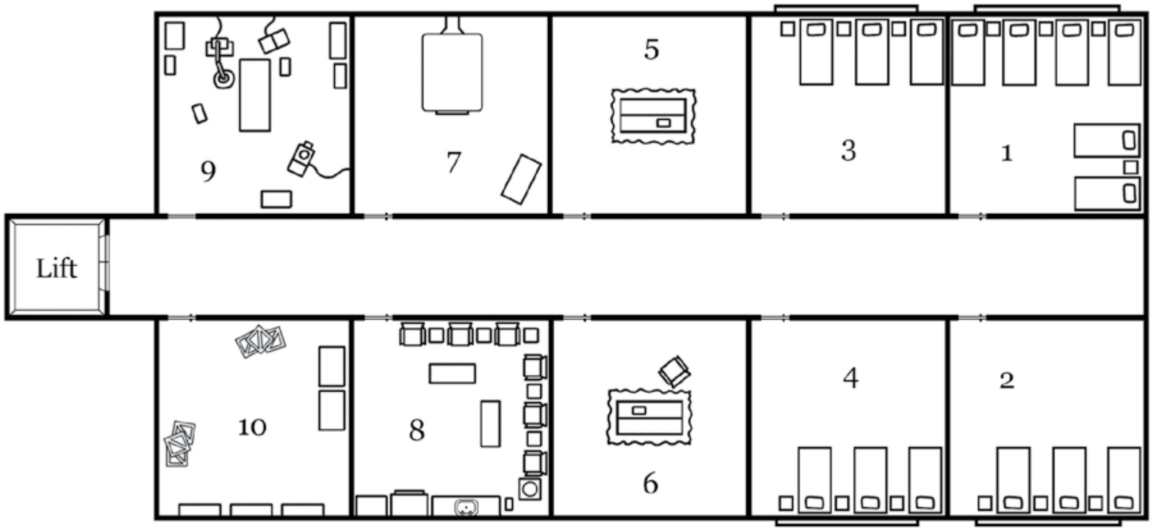
Scene Essentials

- A hospital corridor covered in the blood and remains of the kind nurse who brought the investigators breakfast.
- Hidden in the nurse's viscera are a master key and a key to the 'lift' at the far end of the corridor.
- Nine further doors can be seen down the corridor.

Scene Details and Description

Beyond the circular window of smoked glass looks to be a bare hospital corridor, it's difficult to see more than this without actually opening the door. When the investigators do so, they see that the walls of the corridor through the door are painted in three colours: the top half of the corridor is painted an off-white colour, whilst at approximately waist height the colour changes to a brown-green colour. The third colour is red – blood is sprayed across the walls,

The Hospital Corridor



1. Recovery Room
2. Recovery Room
3. Recovery Room
4. Recovery Room
5. Isolation Room
6. Isolation Room
7. Incinerator Room
8. Rest Room
9. Operating Theatre
10. Store Room

ceiling and floor. A sea of blood and viscera forms a pool over the floor. Small shards of white bone lie strewn about, as do chunks of flesh, organs and pieces of blue and white cloth.

This is the remains of the nurse. She has quite literally been ripped to shreds, her blood and guts cover the floor, walls and ceiling for a distance of about eight feet in all directions – call for SAN rolls (0/1D4).

If the investigators want to search through the nurse's remains – a further SAN roll (0/1D2), they find a broken nurse's watch and some hairpins. Hidden inside a piece of gore-covered white material (requiring a Spot Hidden success at –30%) is a key ring with two keys: a master key for all of the rooms in this ward and a key that operates the lift – try to avoid having the investigators find the keys until later in the scenario (when they really think about it and realise that the nurse should have some means of accessing the 'lift').

The corridor, itself, appears like any other hospital corridor. The door that the investigators have come through is at one end of the corridor; there are four further doors on this side of the corridor and another five doors on the opposite side. The corridor ends (nearest to them), in a featureless wall, whilst at the far end there is what looks to be a pair of lift doors.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Note that wading through the viscera of the nurse in bare feet is not the most pleasant activity and investigators should suffer at least a further point of SAN Loss, dependent on their reactions and the Keeper's discretion.

Scene V and Beyond

After **Scene IV – The Corridor**, the direction of the scenario follows the actions of the investigators. The contents of rooms 2 through 8, the Operating Theatre and the Store Room follow. The Keeper is free to alter, embellish and otherwise change these rooms, their contents and order at their discretion.

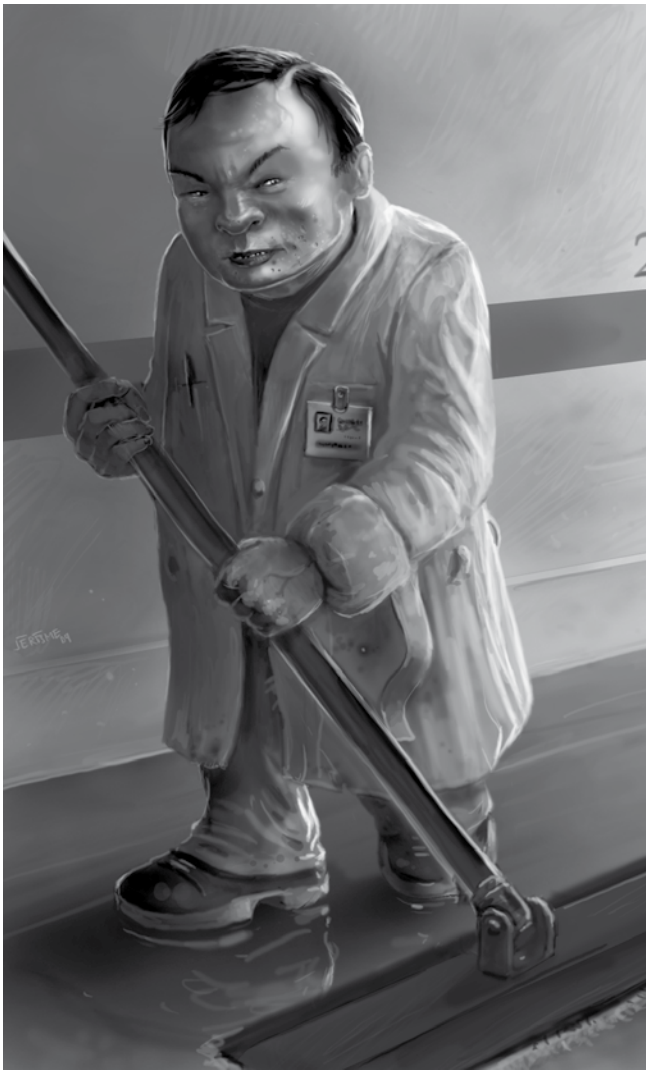
Ultimately, the investigators are faced with the challenge of how to operate the 'lift' and then how to escape without being the Star Vampire's next meal. Not forgetting that they might also have to come to terms with the grisly fact that their 'insides' now sit in jars inside a fridge in the Store Room!

Recovery Rooms (2, 3 and 4)

The doors to these rooms are unlocked and all have a circular smoked-glass window inset within them. The interiors of the rooms are also virtually identical, with three beds and bedside cabinets apiece. All the beds are made up with clean sheets and the cabinets also contain clean sets of towels, dressing gowns, bedpans and the like.

The false windows (roll blinds with strip lighting) are identical to the one in the room where the investigators awoke.

Whilst searching through these rooms, have the investigators closest to the door/s make a Listen roll. A success means that a "ting" sound is heard, coming from the corridor – presumably, the lift at the end of the corridor. By the time any of the investigators get to the corridor, they see a short, Asiatic-looking man with sharp, pointed teeth in an evil grin, exiting the lift. He is carrying a mop and bucket. As soon as the



man sees the investigators, he steps back into the lift and frantically bangs on the inside of the lift, causing the doors to shut.

The Tcho-Tcho was sent by the doctor to clean up after the Star Vampire. Seeing that the 'patients' have escaped their bonds, the Tcho-Tcho makes a speedy exit and now goes in search of the doctor to inform him of the situation.

Isolation Room (5)

The door to this room does not have a window inset within it. The door is unlocked and when it is opened, a strong smell of lavender wafts from inside.

Within, in the centre of the room is a white curtained area, roughly 7 × 5 foot area, presumably hiding a bed within. There is no (false) window, nor is there any obvious furniture.

Once inside, the investigators sense that underlying the aroma of lavender, is the stench of death; a rotting scent, as if something died in here and left a 'stain' imprinted upon the very fabric of the room. Investigators with POW 15 or higher feel queasy whilst in this room.

Closer inspection of the curtain reveals reddish-brown stains splattered over the material – most probably dried blood. At the foot of the curtain are three lavender-scented room 'fresheners'.

Looking past the curtains, the investigators see a hospital bed on top of which sits a rectangular white 'tent'. Much like the curtains, the tent's fabric is discoloured with yellow-brown and dark red-brown stains – there's actually hardly an area of the tent that remains white, it's as if someone has poured a giant jug of blood and gravy over the entire tent...

A small square of clear, see-through vinyl is set into the right hand side of the tent. Looking through the viewing square, a mass of dirty and stained bed linen lies atop the hospital bed. Whilst there is no obvious sign of a patient, there is movement under the pile of blankets, suggesting that something is alive within.

Lifting the tent from the bed and pulling away the foul smelling blankets reveals a huge mass of fat, yellow maggots writhing atop the bed. The blankets are covered in the things – as is the investigator who lifted the blankets off. Fortunately, whatever the greasy maggots were feasting upon has long since been fully devoured.

Isolation Room (6)

The door to this room does not have a window inset within it. The door is locked, requiring the master key (currently hidden within the viscera of the nurse in the corridor) to open it. Alternatively, investigators may attempt to pick the lock with a Locksmith roll or use brute force to smash the door in – a STR vs. STR 14 roll on the Resistance Table.

Once inside, the investigators detect a sickly sweet smell, as if something has begun to rot.

The room is set out exactly like Room 5, with a white curtained area hiding a bed within. Again, there is no (false) window, nor any furniture – except for a grey metal chair sat at an angle beside the left of the curtained bed area.

Behind the curtains is another tent atop a bed. The tent is clean white, as are the curtains and bed linen, and has a viewing slit set into the right hand side.

Inside the tent is a man, approximately aged in his mid-thirties, apparently sleeping – the investigators can hear a dry wheezing sound as he breathes. His body and face are covered in terrible circular scars, each a bluish colour; some give off a yellow pus, whilst others are stained with dry blood.

If the investigators touch the man, he wakes with a start, emitting a blood-curdling scream – award a SAN Loss of 1 point if the players 'jump' at this! The man stares at the nearest investigator and says (in a dry, whispery voice, getting more hysterical and he goes on):

"I want to die... Can't take it anymore... The invisible monster! Sucking my soul... No more... Why are they doing this? Run..."

At the last word, the nameless man gasps for air and then sinks into the bed. He is dead.

Investigators brave enough to search, can find no evidence of the man's name or any distinguishing evidence.

Keepers may wish to play up the possibility of infection and disease from being in proximity to the unfortunate man, getting players to make CON x5 rolls – making "hhmm' noises should any of them fail. The man is not at all infectious, but that shouldn't stop the players from worrying about it.

Incinerator Room (7)

The door to this room is unlocked. Inside is what looks to be a reasonably new industrial incinerator, with a ventilation pipe running out into the ceiling.

The rest of the room is quite dirty, with black soot stains and grease on the floor and walls. A wheeled trolley stands against one of the walls, its linen sides soiled with dark stains.

The incinerator is a large, black iron box, warm to the touch, although it is not at present 'on', suggesting that it has recently been used. The iron door has a glass viewing panel, allowing the investigators to see an assortment of charred bones inside – anyone with medical knowledge can immediately ascertain that these are human in origin; those without medical training may attempt a Know roll.

Closer examination of the trolley reveals that it contains various bloodied swabs, bandages, paper gowns, gloves and other far less wholesome things, best left to the Keeper to determine.

Starting up the incinerator requires the gas feed to be switched on; the controls are on the right hand side – to turn the incinerator on requires a successful Mechanical Repair roll (+20%) and also allows the investigator to regulate the gas flow for optimum efficiency.

An investigator wishing to explore the ventilation pipe as a possible route of escape are out of luck as the pipe runs upwards and joins the hospital's main ventilation system, through a series of impassable grates and grills. Also, the pipe can only accommodate someone who is SIZ 6 or below.

Rest Room (8)

The second-to-last door on the right appears to be some sort of rest room as it contains six comfortable chairs, a water cooler, a refrigerator, a cupboard and a work surface containing a sink. The furniture and sink are all new and seem unused. The cupboard contains a jar of coffee, a loaf of bread and eight cups. Some teaspoons can be found in the cupboard drawer and on the work surface is an electric kettle and a toaster. A solitary pint of full fat milk sits in the refrigerator.

Operating Theatre (9)

The door to this room is not fitted with a lock or even a door handle, simply a white metal 'push' plate.

Inside, the room is revealed to be an operating theatre. An unusually low, metal operating table sits in the centre, surrounded by metal trolley tables, an angled light array, trolley waste bins, a defibrillator (crash-cart), electro-cardiograph machine, two small oxygen supplies, anaesthetic and other equipment familiar to an operating room.

A selection of sterile surgical tools (scalpels of various sizes, rib spreaders, kidney dishes, etc.), sits on top of one the trolley tables, alongside a pile of fresh swabs and bandages.

Steadfast investigators who wish to search through the waste bin find only blooded swabs within.

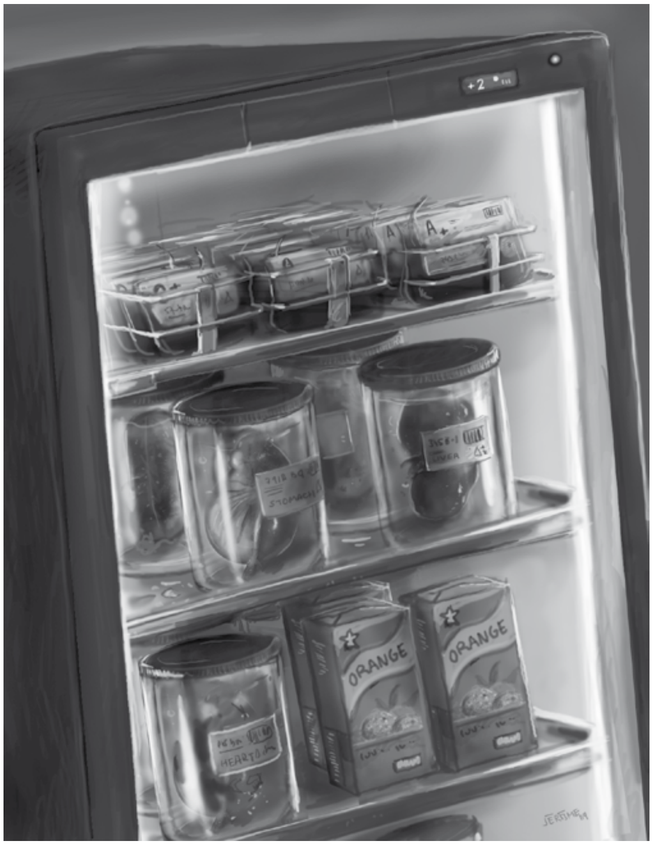
Store Room (10)

The last door on the left is locked, requiring the master key or brute force to open it.

Once inside, the investigators discover a storeroom of sorts, containing two medium-sized industrial refrigerators and three tall cupboards – all of which are unlocked.

In the cupboards are surgical tools, including scalpels, bone saws and the like, as well as towels, spare hospital gowns, linen and bandages, plus any other items that the Keeper wishes.

The refrigerators each contain a number of specimen bottles (varying sizes), which contain a wide selection of organs. Each bottle is labelled, specifying the organ contained inside and a bar code. A number of blood pouches, each labelled by type, are piled next to a carton of orange juice.



Keeper's Note

The organs are all human. In fact, the organs are those of the investigators! Should the jars be sorted, they will discover six (number dependent on the number of players in the game) sets of human organs – heart, livers, kidneys, sections of lungs, stomach, etc. Try to avoid having the investigators make this discovery too soon; ideally, it should come after the confrontation with the Star Vampire, when the investigators find their clothes in Funikoshi's offices.

The Lift Doors

Scene Essentials

- Locked
- Not a lift – connects to the caverns.

Details and Description

The lift doors have a keyhole, as they are not supposed to be operated by 'patients', requiring the second key on the dead nurse's key ring.

Brute force may be employed as a substitute for the key, though some form of leverage must be used in order to prise the doors apart. The doors have STR 45 and up to three people may work together to force them apart, comparing their combined STR against 45 on the Resistance Table.

Once the lift doors actually open, a cheery "ting" sound can be heard. The interior looks like a standard lift interior (plain metal sides, floor and ceiling fitted with lights), a second set of lift doors are situated on the far side of the lift – presumably, the lift opens out in the opposite direction on other floors. 'Open' and 'close' buttons are situated to the side of each of the doors. Note that there are no buttons labelled for other floors.

Should the button be pressed, the appropriate door opens or closes accordingly, though a door only opens if the other, opposite door is shut – thus to open the opposite door the investigators must be inside the lift with the door 'behind' them shut in order to open the other door. To make matters more confusing, should any investigator remain in the corridor whilst the others enter the lift (and the door then closes), they need the key to open the door again – obviously those already inside the lift can open and close the doors by simply pressing the buttons.

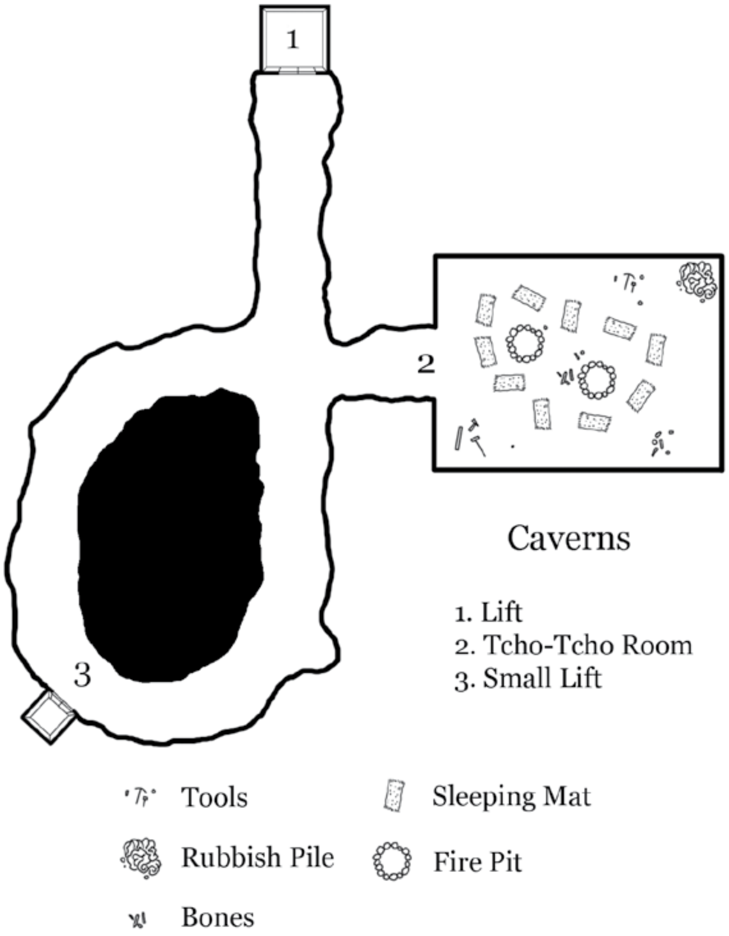
Beyond the lifts other doors there is the cavern system and not a corridor as expected.

If the investigators have jammed one of the doors open and then use Strength to prise open the other door, the doors attempt to close every second, emitting a "ting" sound each time they do so – this not only gets wearing very quickly, but may also alert anyone in the caverns.

Caverns

Scene Essentials

- The investigators can see although there is no evidence of illumination.
- Rough-hewn walls, smooth worn floors.
- Tcho-Tcho!



Scene Details and Description

A rocky, rough-hewn tunnel leads out from the second set of lift doors. There is no illumination in the tunnels, but the investigators can see perfectly well – do not bring this to their attention, but agree with them if anyone notices.

This area is very basic, consisting of a short tunnel leading to a crossroad. At the crossroad, the left exit goes for a short distance and then opens up into the **Tcho-Tcho Room**, whilst the right exit and straight on, are the two ends of a single loop that has another lift at its furthest point.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

As the investigators move through the caverns, they may hear sounds coming from the Tcho-Tcho's labour – guttural moans, sounds of exertion, metal striking stone and even the occasional evil-sounding laughter. Note that these sounds cease depending on whether the Tcho-Tchos go to sleep before the investigators encounter them (see the **Tcho-Tcho Room**).

Play on the player's apprehension and fear of what might lie ahead; remind them (if they haven't found their clothes), that they are only wearing thin, papery gowns and that they are very cold. Play on the fact that there are no lights set in the walls or ceiling, yet the investigators can see. The players should effectively feel that they are entering the realm of the unknown, naked and witless, ultimately to face some dire and horrific 'thing' that shall surely be their end!

Tcho-Tcho Room

Scene Essentials

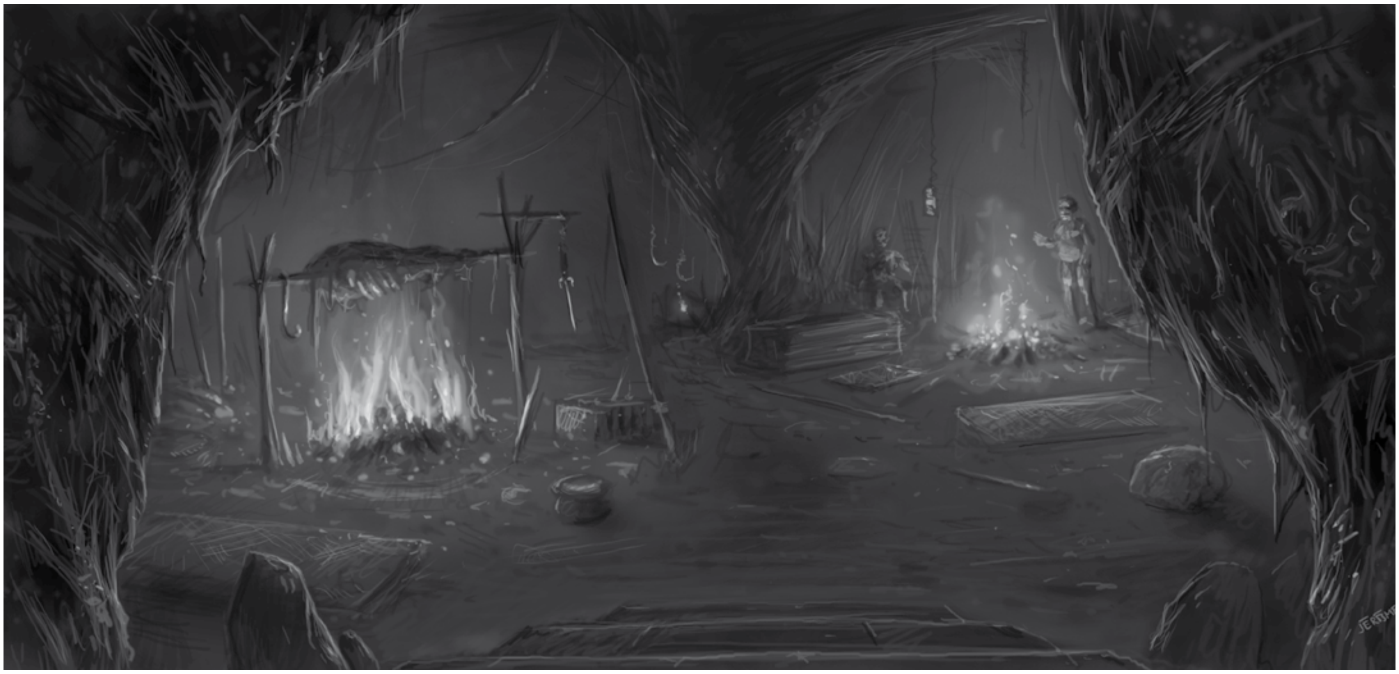
- Mythos tomes contain the Bind/Command Star Vampire spell.
- Tcho-Tcho with spears and knives.

Scene Details and Description

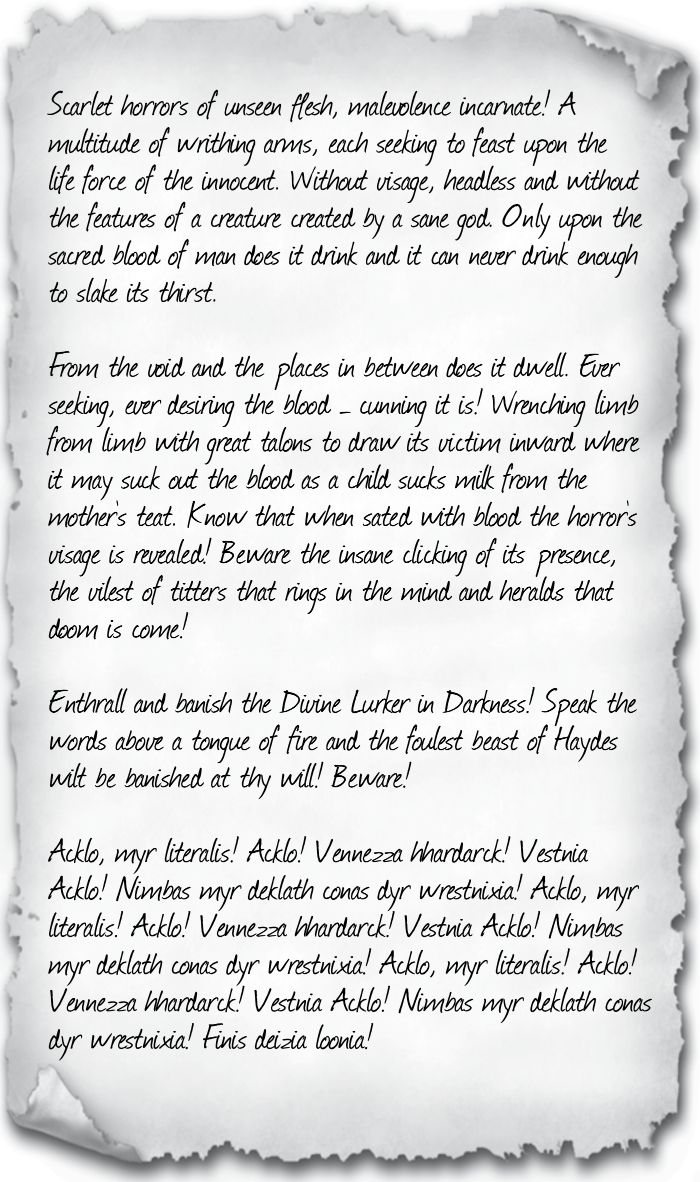
The Tcho-Tcho act to guard and also inhabit this area, by command of Dr. Funikoshi and may be aware that the investigators have escaped their bonds – see the description in the **Recovery Rooms** section.

When the investigator's approach, the Tcho-Tcho are either awake and 'working' or (dependent on the amount of time passed) asleep on their woven sleeping mats; the decision is left for the Keeper to determine – see following.

The cavern room is the living quarters of the Tcho-Tcho, where they sleep, eat and worship when not otherwise engaged in activities for the doctor. The area carries a strong, earthy smell and is illuminated by two large open fires set in the middle of the cavern. Around the fire pits are rough, woven straw mats upon which the Tcho-Tcho sleep and rest. Also arrayed around are numerous tools including mops, buckets, wrenches and spears. In the far left corner, beyond the sleeping mats, is what at first appears to be a heap of rubbish.



Player Handout 1: The Divine Lurker in Darkness



Scarlet horrors of unseen flesh, malevolence incarnate! A multitude of writhing arms, each seeking to feast upon the life force of the innocent. Without visage, headless and without the features of a creature created by a sane god. Only upon the sacred blood of man does it drink and it can never drink enough to slake its thirst.

From the void and the places in between does it dwell. Ever seeking, ever desiring the blood – cunning it is! Wrenching limb from limb with great talons to draw its victim inward where it may suck out the blood as a child sucks milk from the mother's teat. Know that when sated with blood the horror's visage is revealed! Beware the insane clicking of its presence, the vilest of titters that rings in the mind and heralds that doom is come!

Enthrall and banish the Divine Lurker in Darkness! Speak the words above a tongue of fire and the foulest beast of Haydes wilt be banished at thy will! Beware!

Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza hhardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza hhardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza hhardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Finis deizia loonia!

Keeper's Note: Casting the spell requires 1 Magic Point to be spent per 10% chance of success (thus 3 MP gives a 30% chance of succeeding), and costs 1D3 SAN – all in the presence of a naked flame or fire. Cast successfully, it enables the caster to 'push' the creature away (approximately 10 feet per Magic Point spent). A greater version of the spell is known by the Tcho-Tchos who are able to employ it to command the Star Vampire to attack and consume any trespassers or escaped patients who manage to find their way in to the caverns.

One of the fires appears to be the main cookery area, complete with roasting spit, chopping boards, large evil-looking knives and bottles of barbecue flavoured sauce. There appears to be some sort of 'animal' on the roasting spit, giving off the smell of pork – the investigators are probably getting hungry by now? Of course, the 'pork' is, in fact, cooked human, the Tcho-Tcho's favourite meal (the doctor lets them keep failed experiments). Unwitting investigators, should they at some point discover exactly what they have been eating, should make a SAN roll (0/1D4).

The pile of rubbish is actually the entire worldly goods of these strange 'humans', consisting mainly of clothes, bales of straw and a few gnawed bones. However, searching through the mess (Spot Hidden roll), may reveal a collection of aged parchment papers, loosely held together with some dried strings of gut. The papers are covered in elegant, hand written text and diagrams – in a combination of Latin and German. The papers form an incomplete copy of *De Vermiis Mysteriis* and they contain the Command Star Vampire spell (called "*Enthrall the Divine Lurker in Darkness*", as well as some basic information about Star Vampires. In addition, information about the Tcho-Tcho and Miri-Nigris can be found – see **Player Handout 1**.

If the Tcho-Tcho are asleep:

As the investigators approach, call for Listen rolls to hear what sounds like a number of people snoring heavily. Successful Sneak rolls allow the investigators to approach without risking waking the sleeping inhabitants – failure means that 1D4 Tcho-Tcho hear them coming and are prepared with either knives or spears.

Careful investigators who do not rouse the sleeping Tcho-Tcho can observe the contents and layout of the cavern; however, a second successful Sneak roll is required for anyone wishing to search the room (particularly the pile of 'rubbish') – failed rolls mean that all of the Tcho-Tcho wake up!

If the Tcho-Tcho are awake:

As the investigators approach, the sounds of guttural moans and metal striking stone grow louder. Investigators able to succeed in Sneak rolls are able to observe the Tcho-Tchos 'working' – stirring large pots over an open fire, turning the spit roast and butchering meat on large stone slabs. The Tcho-Tcho continue in this manner until the food is cooked, whereupon the group sits around one of the large fire pits and proceeds to share out their unspeakable meal of human flesh.

Occasionally, one of the Tcho-Tcho exits the cavern to perform a circuit of the cavern system, checking that nothing is amiss (like escaped investigators!).

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Clever investigators avoid directly confronting the Tcho-Tchos, given that they are less well armed and at a certain disadvantage. Whilst the incomplete copy of *De Vermiis Mysteriis* provides useful information and a way to stop the Star Vampire attacking, it is not essential if the investigators can bypass the Tcho-Tchos and escape from the cavern complex.

In a confrontation, the Tcho-Tcho's aim is to subdue, rather than kill, the investigators, and take them back to the secret hospital ward for the doctor to deal with. However, should one of the Tcho-Tcho be killed, then all bets are off and the remaining Tcho-Tcho may decide to sacrifice the investigators to their 'god' by summoning the Star Vampire. If the investigators can escape before the monster appears, or perhaps even when it does, then there is a chance that they could still escape.

The Guardian and the Second Lift

Scene Essentials

- A wandering Star Vampire
- A second lift door provides a possible escape

Scene Details and Description

A wood-panelled small lift, about four feet square, is incongruously sited in the rock wall. There is a panel to the left hand side with three buttons in a vertical line, marked "1" , "2" and "<>". Pressing the "1" button is required to operate the lift, but there is a short delay in the doors closing. If the Star Vampire is chasing the investigators, this door delay can prove to be particularly tense.

At an opportune moment, as the investigators first see the lift doors, they are confronted with the Star Vampire (see page 102 for description and statistics). Keepers are advised to foreshadow the monster's 'appearance' by having the investigators attempt Listen rolls to hear the approaching clicking and high-pitched twittering sounds, and other such heralds of the creature's presence.

Although these creatures are normally invisible, the operation on the investigators eyes has 'adjusted' them so that they can now see invisible entities. This is, of course, a double-edged sword!

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Getting past the Star Vampire is a key aim of the game. Investigators may use the spell (if they have discovered it), otherwise they will need to keep their wits about them and decide upon a plan. Clever investigators might use the blood and organs (from the refrigerators in the secret hospital ward), as decoys; luring the creature away from the lift doors whilst they make their escape. Keepers should note that such organs are probably the investigators own ones! Upon realising exactly what they have been feeding the monster, SAN rolls should apply!

The Star Vampire is not a mindless monster; it is intelligent and should be played as such. It does not follow trails of blood blindly, but it is hungry and the investigators can play upon this insatiable desire.

In playtest, one player declared that such "things" could not exist and thus he was going to "disbelieve the illusion" and tried to walk right through the monster – not a pretty sight and an unfortunate end to the investigator!

The Corridor Above

Scene Details and Description

When operated, the second lift opens into a wood-lined corridor that goes on for twenty feet and ends in a wood-panelled (unlocked) door, beyond which is a further two doors: one with a frosted glass window on the left (locked), and a plain wooden door to the right (unlocked).

Inside the right hand door are piles of clothing and shoes – these are, in fact, the clothes and shoes that the investigators were wearing before they were kidnapped – along with any identification (wallets, cards, etc.) that they may have had on them.

The locked door to the left requires a successful Locksmith roll to open it, or brute force (the door has STR 12). This door leads into Dr. Funikoshi's private office.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Once the investigators find their clothes they will most likely want to change out of their dirty hospital gowns, providing the ideal moment for them to discover the second 'medical' procedure that has been performed on them – see **Foul Experimentation** on page 88.

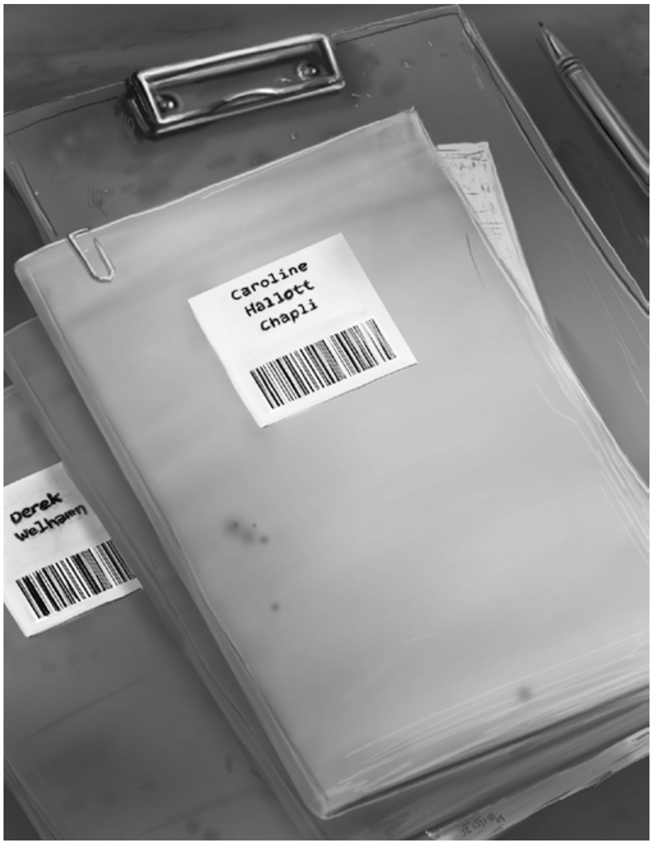
Funikoshi's Private Office

Scene Essentials

- Filing cabinet contains investigator's details.
- Dr. Funikoshi makes an appearance.
- Escape?

Scene Details and Description

The office beyond the door is well maintained, modern and very tidy. A large oak desk dominates the room, behind which are plate glass windows. To the left hand side of the desk is a tall metal filing cabinet. Opposite the door from which they entered is another wood panelled-door (locked).



Atop the desk are a reading light, a collection of neatly arranged stationery and a name plaque for a "Doctor Funikoski". The desk has a single (locked) drawer and should the investigators manage to pick or break the lock (Locksmith / STR 9) they discover a fully loaded .22 automatic pistol inside (1D6 damage, 6 bullets).

A search of the filing cabinet reveals numerous patient files each with an attached barcode, including ones for each of the investigators, written in Thai (only names are recognisable). Some contain photographs showing 'before and after' shots of the doctors insane medical experimentation (it is left to the Keeper to determine what such photographs show and the SAN loss that goes with viewing!)

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Once the investigators have made the discovery that their internal organs have been removed and replaced with green slime and odd mushroom-shaped constructs, allow the players a couple of moments to think though their situation. At this point, Dr. Funikoshi should make an appearance – unless the investigators have been purposefully quiet, he is likely to hear them and be prepared – entering with a warm smile and arms open wide.

Given the opportunity, Dr. Funikoshi explains that he has "*improved*" the investigators and that they are now *"as good and special"* as people can be; the operations were a total success! Play Funikoshi as over-the-top as you dare (he is somewhat insane after all), very excited and almost child-like in his enthusiasm. This is a bluff, of course – at the first opportunity he attempts to retrieve his gun from the locked desk drawer (*"just getting the information you need..."*), and then force the investigators back down into the secret ward and into their beds to await the doctor's further 'treatments'. Naturally, if able, Funikoshi calls for back up from hospital security – Tcho-Tcho in uniforms.

During play tests, the investigators have usually attacked and killed Funikoshi, providing an opportunity to escape through the main hospital. In this situation, the investigators effectively destroy the only means to find answers to what has happened to them (and reverse it) – providing a suitably fitting end to the story! In a different game, two investigators decided to give themselves up when they discovered what had happened to them, reasoning that only Funikoshi could undo the operations as, if they went as willing test subjects, the doctor might view them favourably and release them at some future date.

In one game, the escaped investigators (bloodied,

Continuing the Scenario

Whilst this scenario is designed to be played as a one-shot adventure, it is feasible to use it as a platform for a continuing campaign in which the investigators, having escaped from the mad doctor, must now try to find a cure for their physical predicament. Possible avenues of exploration are:

Funikoshi's Notes

Once translated, the patient records found in the doctor's private office lead the investigation to another doctor (possibly in Thailand or some other foreign clime) who is mentioned in the notes. The second doctor is also conducting strange medical experiments – perhaps he can be 'persuaded' to make them normal again?

Strange Magic

Rather than seek a medical cure, the investigators might turn to magic – leading them on an ever-spiralling descent into the depths of the Mythos, Tcho-Tcho wizards and esoteric texts; all of which bring their own terrors and 'rewards'.

More Than Human

The investigators bodies are different. They can see in the dark and they can see things that others cannot – pretty useful skills for Mythos investigators! Who knows what exactly the effects of removing their organs and replacing them with other 'things' will be? Perhaps the effects are both a boon and a bane. An interesting campaign could be developed where the investigators begin to delve into the Mythos, encountering a myriad of foul plots, wherein they further discover that they can perform superhuman feats, only to realise that as they grow more accustomed to their newfound powers they also grow to resemble the very creatures and horrors that they are fighting against. Whilst, at first, they are able to go unnoticed through society, they soon draw unwanted attention from a range of 'interested' parties...

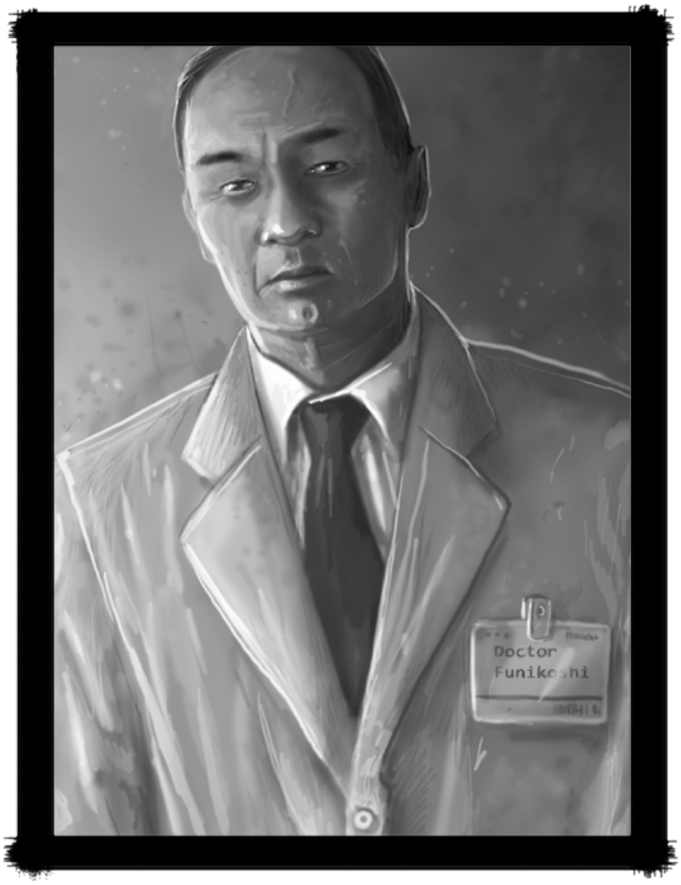
tired and looking the worse for wear) went their separate ways and were eventually picked up by the police (or they sought the police out). Following medical examinations, their 'injuries' were deemed to be of interest by the 'authorities' and they were taken to a secret military installation only to suffer further experimentation!

Conclusions and Rewards

Where and how the investigators end up is essentially for them and the Keeper to determine. The following Sanity awards may be given:

- If they escaped from the Star Vampire using cunning and guile: +1D10 SAN
- If they killed Funikoshi: +1D6 SAN
- If they escaped from the hospital: +1D4 SAN

Protagonists & Villains



Doctor Funikoshi (Miri-Nigri)

Insane, excitable medical practitioner.

STR 15 DEX 16 INT 18 CON 13
SIZ 10 APP 11 POW 16 EDU 24
SAN 0 Hit Points: 12
Age: 45 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Accounting 49%, Anthropology 36%, Biology 70%, Chemistry 65%, Computer Use 53%, Conceal 34%, Credit Rating 46%, Cthulhu Mythos 47%, Fast Talk 30%, Hide 40%, Library Use 31%, Listen 32%, Medicine 84%, Occult 67%, Other Language – (German 45%, Greek 23%, Japanese 46%, Latin 54%, Tcho-Tcho 70%), Persuade 20%, Pharmacy 34%, Psychology 20%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 53%

Weapons: Fist 55% (1D3+1D4), Kick 35% (1D6+1D4), .22 Automatic 26% (1D6)

Tcho-Tcho (number as required)

Short, sharp-toothed cannibals.

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
STR	9	15	17	9	8	14
CON	14	15	12	11	9	8
SIZ	6	7	8	7	8	8
INT	14	15	14	16	12	15
POW	15	15	15	15	15	15
DEX	12	11	14	8	15	7
SAN	0	0	0	0	0	0
HP	10	11	10	9	8	8
DB	–1D4	0	+1D4	–1D4	–1D4	0

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Hide 48%, Listen 34%, Occult 27%, Other Language – (English 46%, Thai 67%), Psychology 10%, Sneak 42%, Spot Hidden 23%

Weapons: Fist 57% (1D3+/–DB), Kick 45% (1D6+/–DB), Hunting Knife 36% (1D6+/–DB), Spear 35% (1D6+/–DB)

Spells: Command/Bind Star Vampire.

Star Vampire

Multiple-mouthed foulness from hell.

The Star Vampire appears like a cloud of writhing snakes, floating about six feet off the ground and emitting a strange clicking sound, accompanied by a high-pitched twittering dreadfully alien to the human ear.

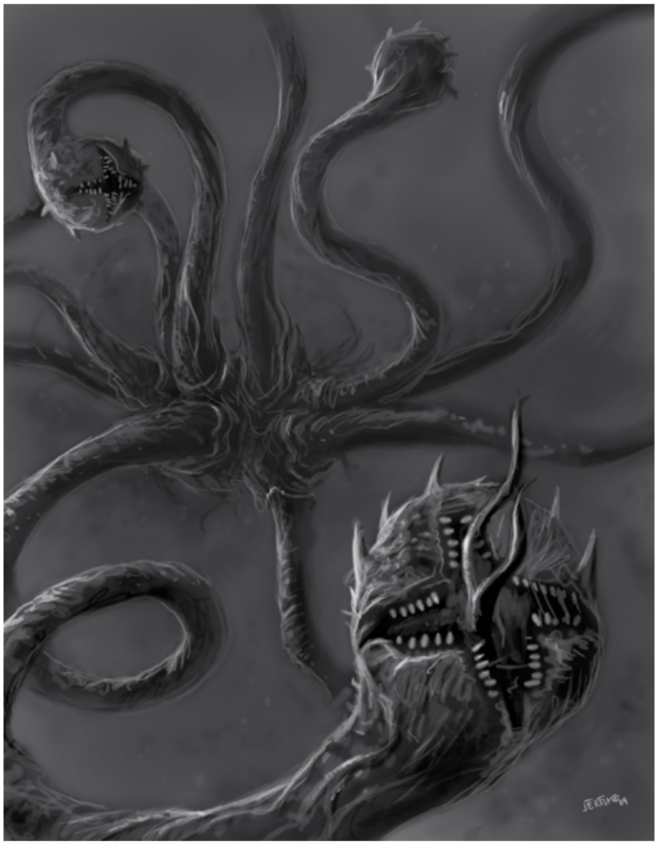
STR 26 DEX 10 INT 11 CON 13
SIZ 26 APP – POW 16 EDU –
Hit Point: 20 Move: 6/9 flying

Weapons: 1D4 Talons 40% (1D6+2D6), Bite 80% (1D6 STR – blood loss per round)

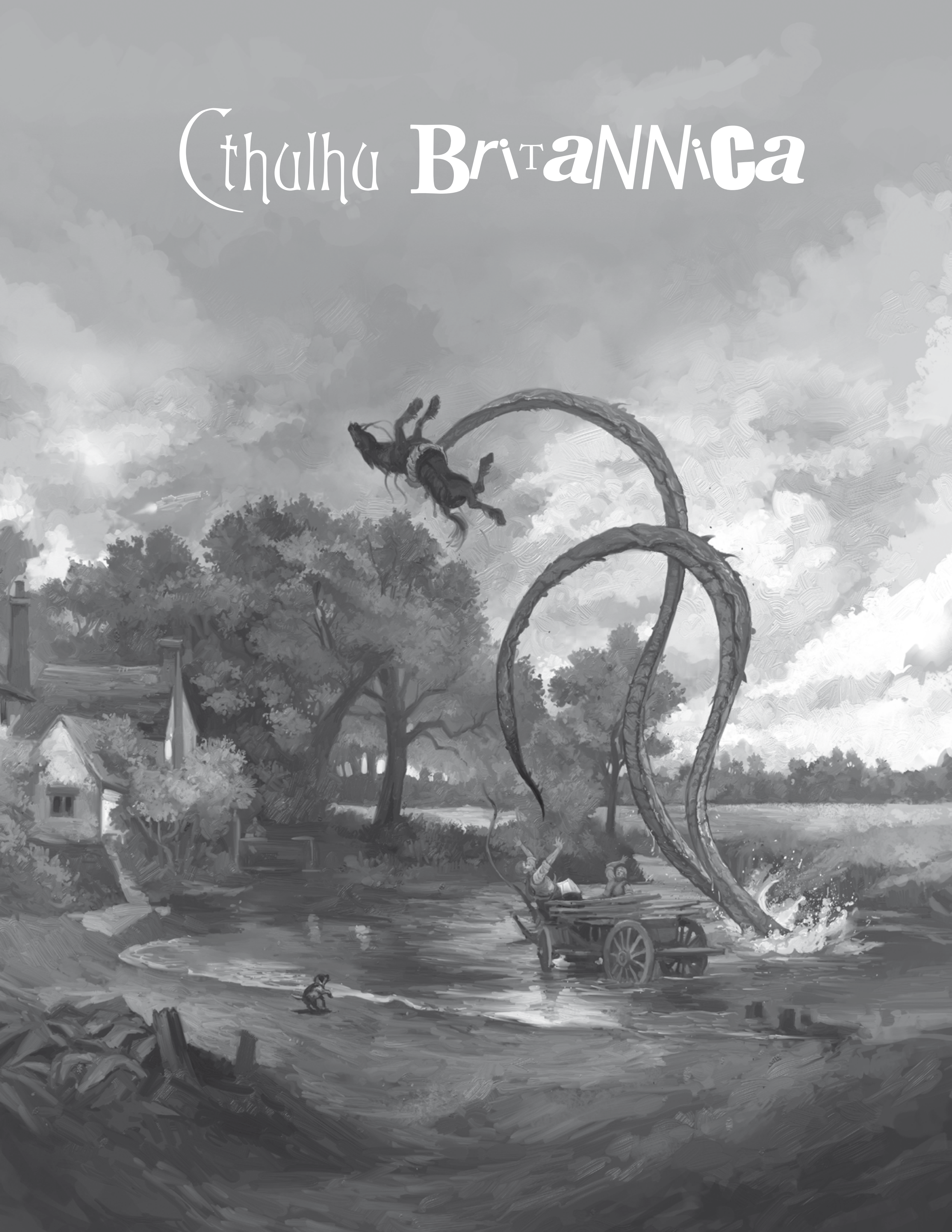
Armour: 4-point hide. Bullets do only half damage.

Spells: None

SAN Loss: 1/1D10.



Cthulhu Britannica



My Little Sister Wants You To Suffer

An End Times Call of Cthulhu Scenario, by Paul Fricker

Lost and onboard a doomed spaceship, a disparate group of investigators must try to remember who they are and why they are here...

Introduction

In ***My Little Sister Wants You to Suffer*** the investigators are contestants in a reality television game show called ‘Little Sister’. The world that they live in is twenty years in *our* future. Civilisation as we know it still exists, but whilst technology marches on, morality has become ever more decayed and the thirst for new forms of entertainment has lead to entertainment shows that extend the format of reality television to include actual violence, death and mayhem. A number of contestants (the investigators) are selected and drawn from prisons (usually awaiting execution on death row), and other less salubrious locations. Each contestant negotiates what their prize will be, should they somehow ‘win’, before they enter the competition proper. Once the ‘game’ begins, the eager and blood-lusting public get to cast votes, ultimately deciding which of the contestants’ wins the ‘big prize’.

What the contestants do not know is that they have their memories erased prior to participation in the game. This is only temporary and their memories return over the course of the scenario (hopefully).

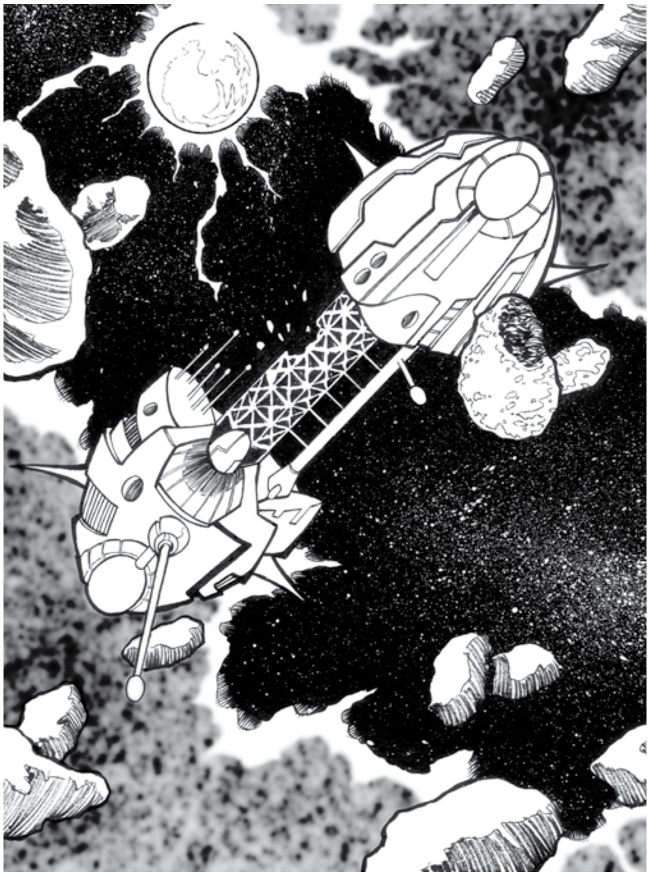
Keeper’s Information

The conceit of the scenario is that the players (and the investigators) do not know the above information – as far as they are concerned what they see is real. There is no game show.

The setting is a mock-up of a spaceship, which (apparently) has left Earth after some terrible, planet-wide disaster. The scenario begins with the investigators waking from (what appears to be) suspended animation. They have no idea about who they are or why they are here – it is up to them to explore their surroundings, piece together any clues that they might find and try to discover and remember the truth.

To ensure that the contestants keep busy and thereby provide added entertainment for the television audience, there are a few surprises arranged by the television company. These include actors physically altered to look like monsters, the implantation of false memories, mock-aliens and so on. Anything to ensure ratings stay high and the watching audience hooked.

It is important to note that the scenario begins with the investigators waking with no memories at all of how they come to find themselves on board the vessel. At this point the players should not be given the pre-generated character sheets. They slowly begin to remember who they are, but what they become depends on how they play the *game*...



Contents

This scenario is divided in to four parts:

Part 1	The upper level where the investigators begin.
Part 2	The lower level.
Part 3	*Did you suffer?* is the climax of the scenario.
Part 4	Contains general information about the ship, the mutants and Keeper knowledge of the investigators.

Note that each scene begins with a section entitled *Scene Essentials,* containing the key information that the Keeper must be aware of for that section – whether or not the players become aware of it is another matter. This is followed by *Scene Detail and Descriptions,* which can be easily adapted by the Keeper as they desire.

Pacing the scenario

The investigators start the scenario in a relatively passive situation and will most likely wish to explore their environment. The first half of the scenario might be spent on the upper level exploring and to increase the drama, the investigators are given a task by the ship's computer – namely to repair the power plant before life support ceases, adding the notion that they are working against time.

Ultimately, during the second half of the scenario, they are likely find themselves seeking the safety of the escape pods – but, guess what, there are not enough to go round…

Player Perception

Be aware that the players will not be sure if they are in a spaceship, an underground bunker or wherever, until the computer tells them. Try not to confirm this until you have to, the aim is to keep them off balance and guessing as long as you are able. The use of red herrings to confuse, cause intrigue and conflict is recommended.

Handling Insanity

If any investigators go insane during the course of the scenario, one option is to play up some aspect of their false memory. For example, the Suzanna player character might see the other players as members of her squad. Rather than trying to remember all of the memories, one method the Keeper can employ is to take the player to one side (out of ear-shot of the other players) and ask them what they think is going on (quite probably something about 'aliens'), then develop some madness based upon on that. This not only keeps the scenario on track, it also allows the players a good deal of control over their investigators – all the better for the 'twist' when it arrives!

Play up the paranoia

Life in the Little Sister 'house' is one of conflict and dissatisfaction. There is never enough of anything to go around. The air is too hot or too cold; there are no toilets and so on. Alongside this, remember that the reality game designers are not 'all knowing', neither do they have an unlimited budget; seize on this to provide oddities in the scenario that are the by-product of cost cutting in production or just plain oversight. It is up to the Keeper to keep the pretense going until later on in the scenario and, at the same time, to incorporate anomalies that cause the players to question what is going on. This can be somewhat of a treat for the Keeper; if players want to nitpick about the design of the ship or space trivia, for example. Who are they going to ask about these things? Try giving them contradictory information on purpose – they will either think that you, the Keeper, have not thought it all through properly, or they will question the reality of their situation. Which is exactly the point!

Keepers can push the unreality aspect of the setting a long way. During play testing, one of the investigators managed to kick through a metal wall panel, which in reality turned out to be a plywood wall – the quick-thinking Keeper threw a mutant at the investigator, taking their attention away from the inconsistency, and they did not pursue the questionable spacecraft construction any further.

My Little Sister **is very much a scenario of paranoia and shifting allegiances amongst the investigators. The Keeper has a secondary role, that of television director with the priority to entertain 'your' TV audience, so you have free reign to manipulate the investigator's environment as you see fit – within the limits of what a television studio might be capable of producing.**

Game Structure

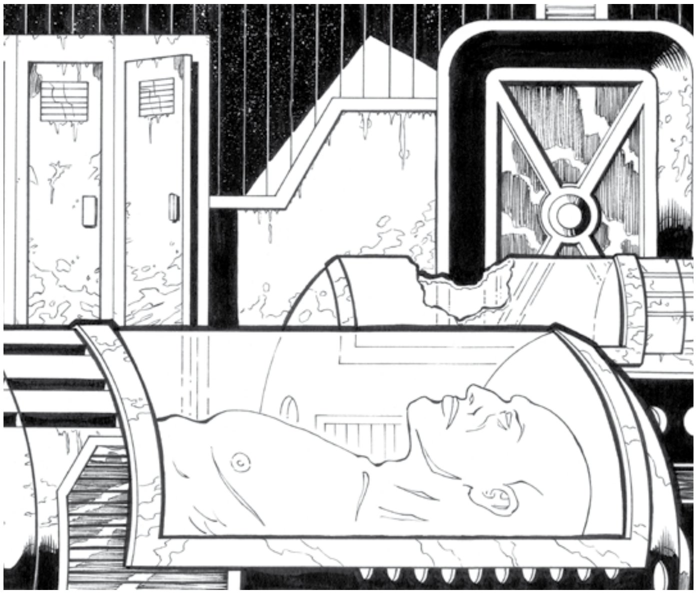
This scenario is designed to be fairly linear in fashion; the investigators wake up, fight a mutant, begin to remember who they are, take the shuttle to the lower level, one of them gets 'infected', they mess up the power plant, fight some more mutants and are ultimately forced to abandon ship – probably killing each other in a race to the last pod. Yes, it's linear, but with good justification – this time there actually *is* an outside force controlling what's happening, rather than a Keeper railroading the players…

The Memory Handouts

At the start of the scenario, each player is given six envelopes and are told not to open them until told to do so by the Keeper. The first envelope contains their character sheet, whilst the other five contain 'memories' that are opened during the course of the events that follow. Note that one of the envelopes contains a 'false memory', which has been implanted by the television company.

The Keeper gives out these envelopes during the first scene (see **The Stasis Room**, below). Players are allowed to open the other envelopes (one at a time) at the discretion of the Keeper at times during the scenario – perhaps one envelope every twenty to thirty minutes. Keepers should be attentive to events that might stimulate a investigator to remember their real lives and provoke a memory to return to them.

Even when the players have their full complement of memories they still won't know what's going on. The purpose of the envelopes is to simulate memories slowly returning. In conjunction with the information that the Keeper presents, some players might figure out the reality of their situation.



Be aware that one or more of the players may be tempted to reveal their memory handouts to other players. You probably want to ask them not to do this; instead, ask such players to communicate their memories to each other through role playing – this is a far better method and the players will enjoy it far more.

Part 1: The Upper Level

The investigators awaken from suspended animation, unaware of who they are or where they are.

The Stasis Room

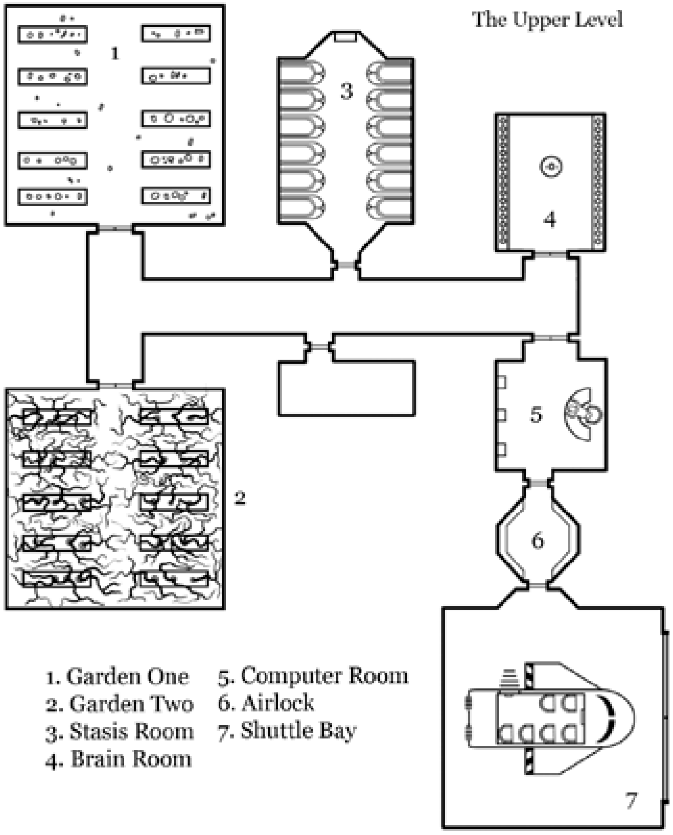
Scene Essentials

- The scenario's starting location.
- The investigators wake with no memories.
- There are other people with them who cannot be woken – one has mutated, one seems to have escaped and one is dead.
- A locker contains clothes and miscellaneous equipment.
- The locker contains names for four of the investigators.
- Hand out the sets of envelopes to each of the players.

Scene Details and Description

The waking investigators each find themselves in a narrow bed with an opaque plastic lid; various wires are attached to their bodies, some with needles inserted into their flesh, others with sticky plastic pads. They are completely naked and the air in the pod is warm and stuffy. To their right, a dim red light illuminates a large button.

If the button is pressed (which – ouch – could cause a needle to be pulled out of their arm), the lid of the 'pod' is released and can be pushed open. This situation is extremely unnerving (given that the investigators have no memory of who they are and why they are 'entombed'), and the Keeper should call for a SAN roll at this point (0/1D3). As yet, the players do not have a character sheet, so ask them to record any SAN loss on a scrap of paper.



At this point give each player a sheet of paper with his or her investigator's physical description on it. For the moment this will be all that they know about themselves. (See Page 118).

The room that they find themselves in is similar to a hospital ward in size and holds twelve pods in all; the investigators occupy six, whilst two are empty. In the other four are the following:

1. A decayed corpse, similarly naked and connected to the pod by various wires.
2. A green-skinned person (alien? mutant?), whose arms are actually tentacles lined with scores of oily-looking suckers, whilst their mouth is agape, revealing numerous long, pointed teeth. Yellow fluid, now drying, leaks from pustules that cover the creature's flesh. Investigators brave enough to open up the pod and risk possible contamination, find that the inhabitant is dead – there is no real risk of disease, this is all 'stage dressing' by the television crew.
3. A (living) human who appears well but who (despite any and all attempts) cannot be woken – providing the investigators with the moral dilemma of having to decide to leave this poor soul behind.
4. The pod is empty, however someone (or thing?) appears to have broken out of it from the inside; wires hang loose and traces of blood can clearly be seen on the edges of the plastic bed lid.

Contents of the Equipment Locker

- **Five jump-suits (various sizes).**
- **Pair of handcuffs and key.**
- **Bar of chocolate.**
- **Penknife.**
- **Wind-up torch.**
- **Small brown cardboard box containing six white plastic cylinders, each about 7 cm long and 2 cm wide (ammunition for a gun that maybe found later – though the computer will tell the investigators that they are food!)**
- **Packet of three condoms.**
- **Roll of adhesive sticky tape.**
- **Taser.**
- **.38 automatic pistol with 4 bullets (two of which are blanks).**
- **Pack of cigarettes, half full (no lighter).**
- **Seashell (with a micro-speaker concealed within).**
- **Pen.**
- **ID tags, each has a first name and shows a photograph corresponding to the investigators..**
- **Keeper's choice – anything suitably random!**

Taser

The taser is a small, black hand-held electroshock weapon that fires two cables carrying an electric charge, causing neuromuscular incapacitation and strong muscle contractions in the target through involuntary stimulation of both the sensory and motor nerves.

Base Skill	**20%**
Damage	**See below**
Range	**14 feet**
Att	**1**
HP	**8**
Charges	**2**

Damage: target is stunned for 1D6 rounds.

A thin layer of dust covers everything in the room and the air is cool. A large (unlocked), locker stands next to the far wall. Inside are five jump-suits (one less than is needed) of various sizes in crumpled heaps, as well as some miscellaneous items (see boxed text). The curious selection of items were provided by the television studio and some by the studio audience (who win money if their item is used).

At this point, give each player their investigator's set of six envelopes and ask them to open the one marked '**OPEN NOW**', (see **Appendx II.III**), which contains a simple character sheet.

Suggestions for Running the Scene

Begin the scenario by asking all of the players to hold a D10 close their eyes and be silent, remaining this way until you tell them otherwise. Then ask them to roll their die (make sure you can see what they roll). The player who rolled highest wakes up first (allowing them to open their eyes and speak), the others remaining 'frozen' until they awake at the Keeper's discretion.

Should skill rolls need to be made at this point (before the character sheets are 'found' in the locker), ask the player to make a roll without telling them their chances of success.

Some players may decide to leave the room without searching and finding the gear in the locker – that's fine, let them go where they wish.

When the investigators get to the locker there is a chance that one or more of them will want to take equipment for themselves, perhaps attempting to conceal it from the others. To facilitate this, write each piece of equipment on to small cards and put the cards on to the table. As they look in the locker they get to look at the stack of cards, taking what they want. This can help to prevent people arguing about who has what piece of equipment as there is a physical item that represents it – unless, of course, you want them at each other's throats from the get-go!

Later in the game, should the investigators forget, the Keeper may wish to remind them of the person who they could not wake, still lying in the Stasis Room.

The Gardens

Scene Essentials

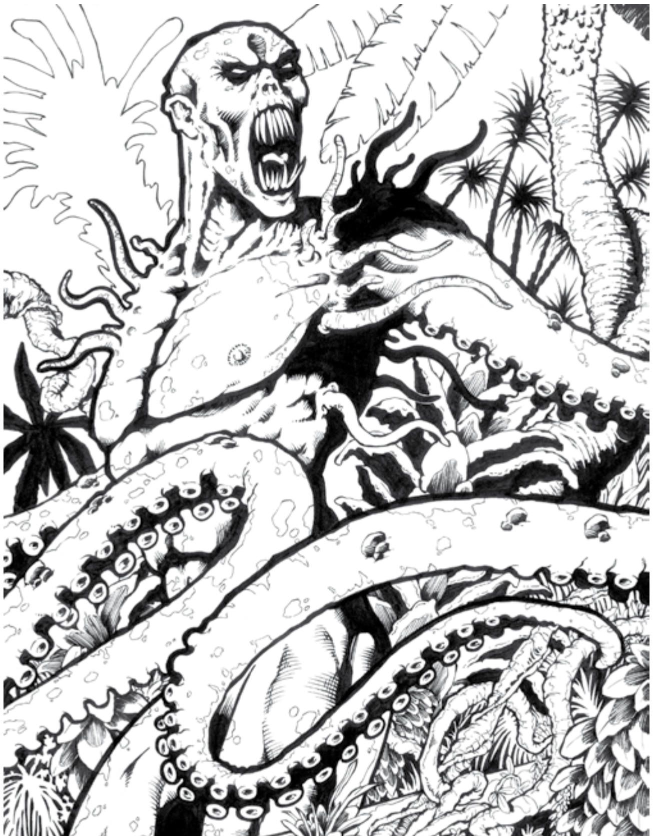
- There are two garden rooms: one where the vegetation is dead; one completely overgrown and very much alive.
- A mutant hides in one room, ready to attack. He has the code to the Computer Room door tattooed on him.

Scene Details and Descriptions

There are two garden areas (#1 and #2), each contains metal, waist-high tables strewn with trays of plants; some flora, some edible vegetables.

Garden 1 is noticeably much cooler than the other areas of the 'complex' (ship) and the lights are very dim – the corners of the room are very dark. Everything in here is dead; the plants are nothing but dried husks, leaves blackened and brown.

Garden 2 is quite different. Very hot, humid air circulates and within minutes anyone in the room is sweating. The lights are full on, illuminating everything in strong, harsh artificial light. Irrigation pipes drip water onto overgrown vines that obscure most of the metal tables and trays, their stretching



tendrils climbing up the walls and along the pipes.

Amidst the vegetation is what appears to be a broken down gardening robot, numerous arms extend from the body, each ending in a variety of tools. Investigators wishing to get the robot working should make successful Mechanical Repair and Electrical Repair rolls. The robot is actually controlled remotely by the crew of the television studio, whether it 'obeys' the investigator's commands it up to the Keeper.

Hiding amongst the overgrown plants is a mutant who will wait for an opportune moment to leap out with a blood-curdling cry and attack the nearest investigator. Full details on the mutant and others of his kind can be found on page 118. Note that this particular mutant has the access code for the Computer Room door tattooed on his leg.

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

Play up the contrast between the two garden rooms; both indicate that a lot of time has seemingly passed – one becoming heavily overgrown, whilst the other falling to neglect and death. Ensure that you describe the atmosphere of each room; the investigators are pouring with sweat in one, whilst their teeth are chattering in the other due to the icy cold. Don't forget that one of the investigators is probably naked; they'll feel the cold all the more.

The robot (if repaired), can be played for laughs or as some sinister, inscrutable device; following individuals around, coming menacingly close with its pinchers and cutting tools, making weird sounds and the like. Remember that the television crew is actually operating it and that they'll do anything to ensure the 'audience' keeps watching. Perhaps the investigators do not repair the robot, but it comes alive anyway, seemingly going berserk and ripping plants from the trays and throwing pots around the room.

The Brain Canister Room

Scene Essentials

- The room is full of what appears to be 'Mi Go' brain canisters.

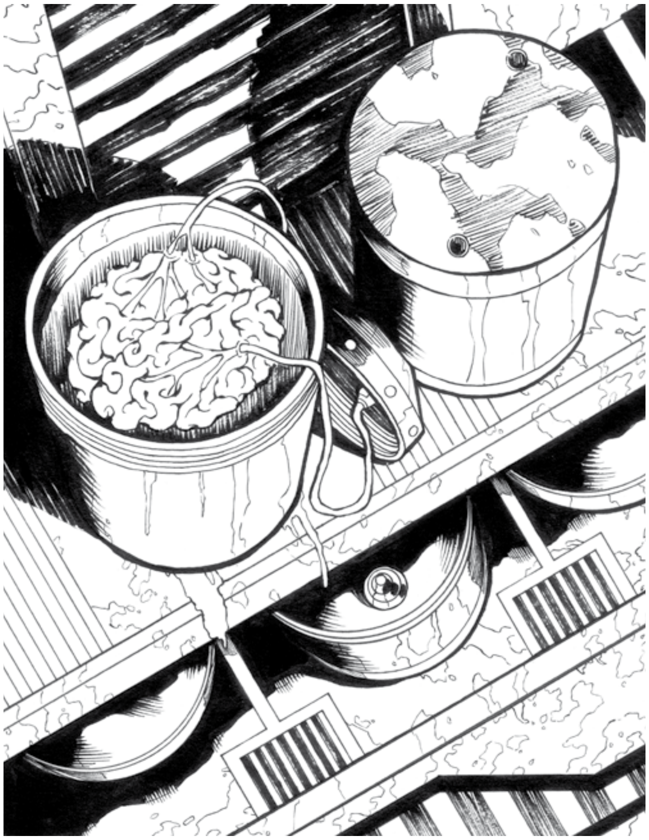
Scene Details and Descriptions

Shelves run down two sides of the room, holding 100 large upright cans, each is the size of catering tins of baked beans (30cm tall). The cans all have screw top lids, fastened with what look like grub screws. Unusually, each lid has two sockets, red and black coloured, built into them. At first glance, the cans could possibly be large batteries of some kind.

In the centre of the room is a metal plinth, on top of which are two wires which end in jack plugs of the correct size to presumably fit into the sockets on top of the cans. A dark brown speaker box sits next to the jack plugs.

Should the investigators unscrew one or more of the lids, they find a brain inside. Wires connect the brain to the lid (to the sockets). The brains are actually from animals, but since none of the investigators have any medical training they can probably assume that they are human brains, requiring a SAN roll (0/1D2).

Should a canister be plugged in to the wires on the metal plinth, the investigators are able to speak to the 'brain' within. The voice emanating from the speaker box sounds remote and not a little insane. What the voice says is entirely up to the Keeper, as in fact it is one of the television studio crew speaking through a microphone (who also has a desk full of special voice altering effects that they can utilize at their whim). Possible conversations or characters that could be employed are (overleaf):



Lifting the Veil

It would be very easy to run this game in a way that prevents the players from figuring out that the whole thing is a sham; simply portray it all in a very convincing manner as the TV studio intends – the twist at the end then comes as a complete surprise. However, it can be more fun for the players (and Keeper), if there is some suspicion that all is not as it seems, even (and especially) if they guess wrongly about the reality of their situation. So drop some subtle hints that all is not right as the game progresses and see what your players make of it.

Here's a list of things that hint to the players that all is not right:

- **The floors are concrete, covered in metal panels.**
- **The walls are plasterboard, covered in thin metal sheets and painted white.**
- **There are tiny cameras everywhere.**
- **The tubes in the power plant are filled with urine (though the players are only told that it smells *like* urine).**
- **The false memories are on different colour paper.**
- **The computer voice keeps changing and is sometimes 'out of breath'.**
- **Investigators might come across a pizza menu or cigarette butt dropped by one of the crew.**
- **The alien is made of synthetic materials.**
- **Crew comments might be accidentally broadcast to the investigators - "switching to number 5", "get Joshua's face".**

Even if they figure out that they are in a TV studio, remember that the cameras are still rolling and that the mutants are real. In fact, if they do figure out what is going on then it really does become a battle to survive and win! Remember that, as Keeper, you are also in the role of the TV show producer and can utilise anything in the studios to influence the investigators as you see fit.

- The little sister of one of the investigators; she is very angry for some reason. Of course, the investigator won't remember whether he or she actually has a little sister or not.
- A soldier from the front-line in the war against creatures of the mythos.
- A doom-laden voice that just keeps repeating lines like, "*you're doomed*" and "*one of you is a traitor.*"
- Random people that the Keeper knows in real life, allowing you to portray them convincingly.

Mostly, the voices are confused and want to know where they are. If the investigators become convinced that they are actually talking to pickled brains, ask them to make SAN rolls (1/1D6).

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

Players familiar with *Call of Cthulhu* might jump to the conclusion that the canisters are Mi Go brain cases. Letting the players make up their own 'plot' can be quite fun as it allows the Keeper to mess around with their expectations and also means that the 'twist' (when they realize that they are in a TV show) becomes more effective.

The scene could well provoke some humour, though a degree of pathos or downright horror can be achieved, depending on how the sad, lost voices are 'played' by the Keeper.

Computer Room

Scene Essentials

- The entry door is locked with a numeric keypad; the code is tattooed on the mutant in the second Garden Room.
- There is a 'dead alien' sat in a chair.
- The ship's computer says the 'ship' has been damaged and that the Upper Section (that they are currently on) is to be jettisoned.
- The computer demands that the investigators make their way to the Lower Section using the shuttle, where they can repair the Power Plant.
- Access to the shuttle is via the airlock in this room.

Scene Details and Descriptions

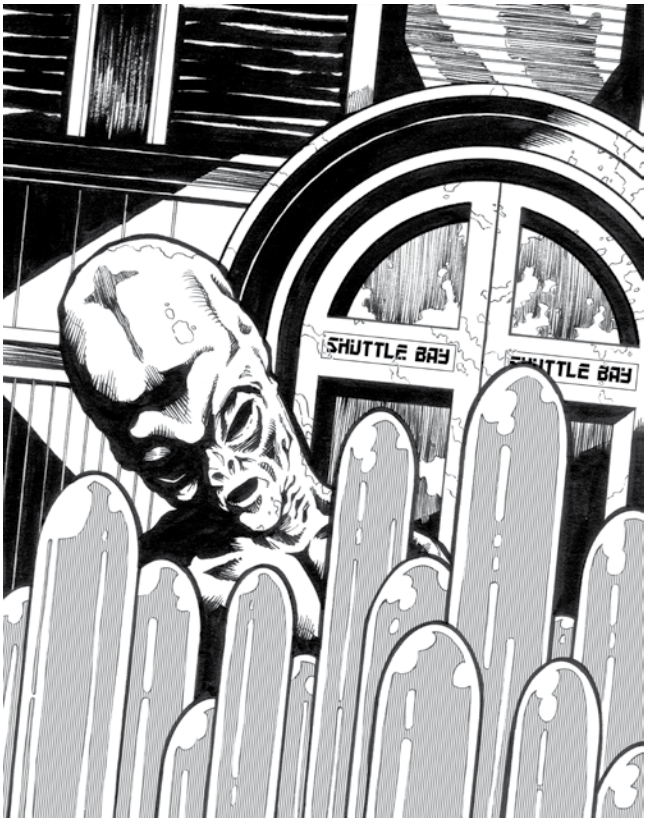
Built into the door of the computer room is a 12-digit keypad. Each key displays a strange, unrecognizable symbol. The door opens if the correct code (tattooed upon the flesh of the mutant in the second Garden Room) is entered. Otherwise, the door may be opened with a combination of ingenuity (Electrical

Repair) and brute force (Resistance roll vs STR 22). Remember that this is all a sham, however, and the television studio crew can make the door open whenever they see fit.

Inside, seated at a table appears to be a dead alien – describe this as a 'classic' grey alien, with large, oval silver eyes in a over-large head. The alien's flesh feels cold and rubbery to the touch – it is actually made from soft plastics should the investigators be brave enough to try to dissect it.

On the table is a mass of geometric shapes that fizz and spark as the investigators approach. These strange items represent an alien computer. Moving the parts about results in non-lethal electric shocks and activates the computer, causing the shapes to all glow with the same colour (a greenish-yellow). The computer begins to speak in a range of different languages and continues to do so until one of the investigators speaks aloud, at which point the computer responds with the voice of a young girl speaking in English – this, of course, is just an actor. Indeed, the voice may change at any time, as the woman doing the voice goes off shift with a new (possibly male) actor taking over.

The table contains a drawer that is half open, within is a large silver-coloured gun, which appears to have chambers for large bullets (actually the plastic bullets from the Stasis Room). The gun works on compressed air and has a range of 15 meters, causing 1D6 damage on a successful hit.



An access door leads to an airlock to the shuttle bay.

The computer's name is 'Father' – the name was simply chosen to contrast with the voice of the 'little girl' – and it responds to questions; some examples follow:

Q: Where are we?
A: You are occupying Ark 20-42, a spaceship comprising two habitat levels. What's your state of mind?

Q: Where are we going?
A: Ark 20-42 is on course for the Beta Canis Majoris system, 73 light years from Earth. The vessel is traveling at twice the speed of light and is, at present, 10% of the way through its journey.

Q: What's the purpose of our mission?
A: The biological specimens are to be part of a zoological exhibition. How are you feeling?

Q: Why have we been brought out of suspended animation?
A: The power plant has sustained damaged, cause unknown. Damage may be repaired in the Lower Habitat Level. There is insufficient power to maintain the Upper Habitat Level and this section shall be jettisoned in 30 minutes time (29 minutes, 28 minutes, 27 minutes…).

Q: How do we get to the Lower Habitat Level?
A: Access to the Lower Habitat Level is normally via the access tunnel.

Q: When you say 'normally', what do you mean?
A: The access tunnel is damaged and unusable. Biological specimens would sustain irreparable damage by using the access tunnel. The Lower Habitat Level can also be accessed via the Ark 20-42's shuttle. Does that cause you concern?

Q: How can we get off this ship?
A: In the event of total ship-wide failure, salvation may be ensured via the escape pods. Six escape pods are fitted to the Ark 20-42. The escape pods are designed to return to Earth, a journey of approximately ten years. The biological specimens may elect to undergo suspended animation during this period. Do you feel better now?

Q: Who's on this ship?
A: The Ark 20-42 left Earth with a biological crew of six and twelve biological specimens, designated as 'human'.

Q: What are the insane, tentacled, green monsters roaming the ship?
A: Bad biological specimens. Do you think you can trust the others?

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

Essentially the computer – the television studio crew – must encourage the investigators to go to the Lower Level and 'mend' the power plant; anything else it tells them is simply window dressing for the purpose of entertainment. Don't give out all of the information unless the right questions are asked, but ensure that the investigators get the essentials – fix the power plant or they'll die.

Play up the computer's voice (little girl's voice) and allow 'it' to make mistakes and inconsistencies. Mocking the investigators and sowing seeds of distrust are both useful functions of the computer. Remember to change the voice if they come back to the computer at a later point.

Shuttle Bay

Scene Essentials

- A small space shuttle for six people that allow the investigators to travel to the Lower Level – actually a flight simulator.
- The craft does not leave this room; the studio crew redresses the room in order to give the illusion of a new location – blocking off the door where the investigators originally entered, changing the signage, and placing a new door labeled 'The Lower Level'.

Scene Details and Descriptions

Through the airlock is a shuttle bay in which sits a six-seater shuttlecraft. Four legs extend from the shuttle, as does a set of steps. Ahead of the small vessel can be seen a pair of large, bay doors, each marked with red warning signs – "WARNING: OXYGEN SEAL" – and presumably open to space.

Once everyone is onboard the shuttlecraft, the steps retract and the door closes. The internal lights dim, the automatic pilot button flashes and the engine whirrs. Within seconds the shuttle begins to move forward and the bay doors start to open, revealing the darkness of deep space.

Of course, nothing is what it appears to be. The shuttle is, in fact, a simulator, which gives the impression of movement by extending and contracting its four legs. During the 'flight' the investigators feel the vessel veer downwards, tilt and rotate, until landing at their destination. In reality, the simulator, apart from a few twists and turns, just turns 180 degrees, so that when the investigator's exit, the shuttle now appears to have landed; the bay doors are now to the rear of the vessel.

The monitor within the shuttle plays a pre-recorded film showing the shuttle passing out through the open bay doors, moving across the Upper Section, past a central access core that joins the two levels, until passing through the bay doors of the Lower Section and coming to rest within. Note that when they pass by the central access core, a big, blackened hole can be seen in its side.

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

The shuttlecraft only takes-off with all of the investigators inside. If some want to stay behind, the computer begins to broadcast a countdown message:

"Warning. Upper level life support failing. Biological specimens must evacuate to lower habitat level immediately."

Be sure to point out that, whilst the investigators are sat inside the shuttle, they are viewing their passage through a monitor screen and not through a window.

Allow the investigators to use their Drive skill to pilot the shuttlecraft. Should the roll fail, the studio crew simulate a crash into the Lower Level bay by hitting the simulator with hammers. Ultimately, they arrive safely in the Lower Level, however badly they steer.

Part 2: The Lower Level

Whilst Part 1 allowed the investigators to explore and seek answers to their situation, the Lower Level provides a much more threatening environment. Mutants lurk around corners and 'alien' eggs lie in wait, ready to explode when the unwary approach.

Second Computer Room

Scene Essentials

- Looks exactly like the Computer Room in the Upper Level, but without the alien.
- The corridor leaving this room is lined with alien egg pods that are 'fired' at the investigators by the studio audience.

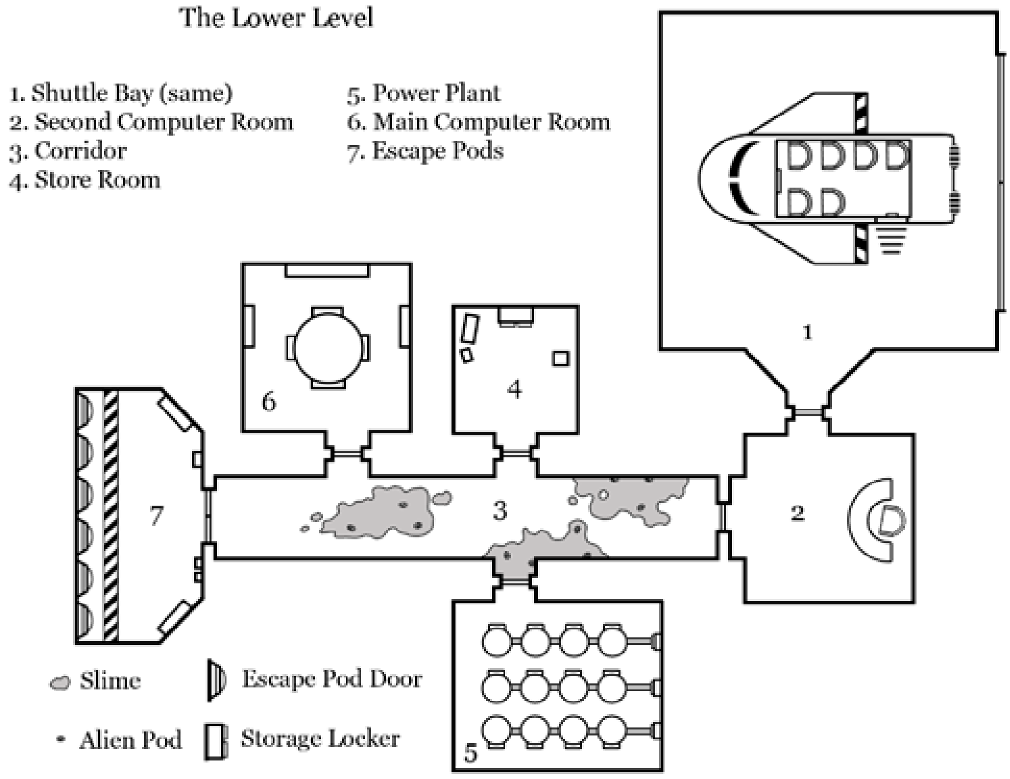
Scene Details and Descriptions

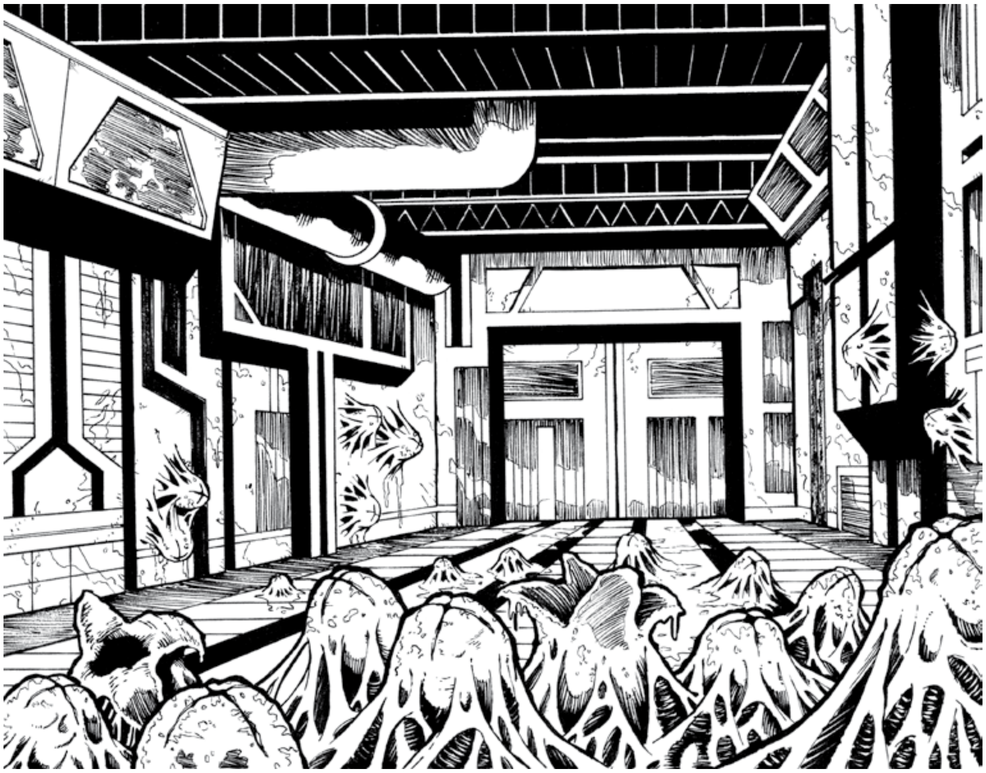
An almost exact replica of the Computer Room on the Upper Level, except that there is no dead alien sat at the table. The computer is disassembled, requiring the investigators to fit the geometric shapes together until they all glow the same colour – this time a pale blue. The computer answers investigator questions (see page 111 for suggested answers) – remember that the computer is being operated by one of the television studio crew who provides answers in order to entertain the audience.

The table drawer is fully closed and if opened, reveals three vacuum-packed pouches all labeled "ANTI-RADIATION. PROTECT EXPOSED SKIN." When torn open, a blue cream like substance oozes out. The blue cream is actually just coloured moisturizer and has no protective properties whatsoever; its only effect is to stain the user's skin a deep blue colour wherever it has been applied.

One door provides access to the shuttle bay, whilst the second leads to a corridor that smells of sulphur. Looking closer, the corridor's walls are covered in a thick black-green slime (the source of the sulphur smell), which slowly runs down in fat globules, making the floor slippery and the whole passageway distinctly unpleasant. Jutting out through the slime on the walls and on the floor are dark leathery pod-like growths, each approximately ten inches high, that rhythmically pulse, suggesting some form of life form; whether animal or vegetable is uncertain. A white-yellow milky substance continually drips from the tips of the pods. Twelve of these foul looking pods 'grow' from the walls of the corridor, although some appear to have burst open, leaving only leathery skin flaps hanging limply. Access to the door at the far end requires the investigators to brave the passageway.

The pods are internally rigged with gas charges that can be triggered remotely by members of the studio audience, (who each get to choose a target). As the gas charge is triggered, the pod explodes and a small, anaemic-looking, squid-like thing is fired out at the nearest investigator. The squids have been grown especially for *"Little Sister"* and each is a living biological creature whose only desire is to burrow into the flesh of a 'host' and begin its metamorphosis. The





squid-things secrete an adhesive glue-like substance that instantly bonds to flesh, clothing and pretty much anything else. In theory, unless some clever precautions are taken, the investigators are likely to have at least one of these squid-things attached to their clothes or skin by the time they reach the far end of the corridor.

Running the gauntlet of the pods calls for a SAN roll (0/1D2).

There are six 'living' pods and each one has a 30% chance to hit, causing 1D4 damage as it begins to burrow through clothing and flesh. If left unchecked, the squid disappears inside the host body and begins to change; effectively, the squid and the host become 'one' – now you know where the mutants are coming from, SAN roll for this realization (0/1D4).

Any investigator inspired to perform emergency intervention (such as cauterization or amputation), in order to remove the squid-things from a host, may make appropriate skill rolls – success means that minor damage was done to the host and only 1D4–1 damage is caused; however, a failure (or no skill used in the attempt) means that 1D8 damage was caused to the host in the process of removing the squid. Keepers may wish to determine how serious such damage is, in terms of whether an arm or leg has been amputated, etc.

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

This scene demands some clever thinking from the players if they are not to all turn into mutants – that, or some mad dashing! Have fun thinking which of the investigators the audience would most want to 'get' – one investigator, well-liked due to his or her behaviour so far, might get through with no problem at all, whilst another (who has become the audience's target of hate), gets blasted by nearly all of the pods. Play this out to bemuse and befuddle the players, who'll have no idea as to why some of them can walk down the corridor without any harm, whilst others cannot move an inch without a pod exploding.

Keepers should feel free to place more pods in the corridor for greater effect, if they so wish. The length of time and the process of an investigator turning in to a mutant has been left to the Keeper decide.

The Power Plant

Scene Essentials

- An arcane power plant requiring urgent maintenance.
- The investigators aim is to get three power cylinders fitted and illuminated.

Scene Details and Descriptions

The Power Plant houses large fuel cylinders, each approximately ten feet long, that supply energy to the vessel. There appears to be twelve spaces for twelve cylinders, each running vertically from floor to ceiling. Only nine cylinders are in place, three of which are illuminated and contain a glowing golden liquid. A further three cylinders lie on the floor.

At the base of each cylinder is a control pad with three buttons:

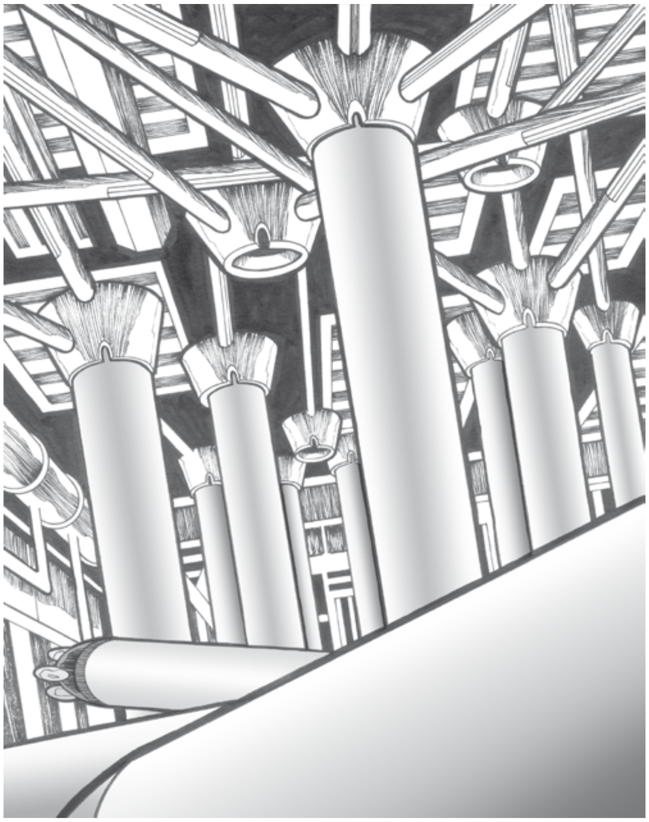
1. Turn on illumination.
2. Turn off illumination.
3. Eject the cylinder.

The control panels at the base of the six unlit cylinders are smashed.

The investigators need to fit the three cylinders that lie on the floor and turn on their illumination in order to get the power plant working (this requires a minimum of six working cylinders).

Up to three people can safely lift one cylinder at a time – add together the STR of all investigators helping to lift the cylinder, with one of the players attempting to roll less than the total on a D100. If this roll is failed, it means that the cylinder slips – now each person tries to roll under their own STR. If at least one of them makes the roll, he or she manages to hold on to it long enough for another group attempt to be made, this time at –10%, otherwise the cylinder falls to the floor and smashes, causing its foul-smelling, acidic contents to splash everywhere (Dodge roll or suffer 1D4 damage).

If, through luck or ingenuity, the investigators do manage to get all three cylinders fitted and working a loud klaxon sounds for 60 seconds and then goes silent.



Store Room

A small chamber containing a high, locked, double-fronted metal cabinet. The only key to this cabinet is currently in the pocket of one of the television studio crew (who forgot to place it in the drawer in the Lower Level Computer Room).

Breaking into the cabinet requires brute force (STR × 5 roll) or skill (Mechanical Repair roll).

Inside are a number of useful and useless items (some chosen by the studio audience):

- A small knife (1D4+db).
- A small pot of black paint.
- A paintbrush.
- An ornate bronze-coloured crown, inset with four red gem stones.
- Keeper's choice.

Main Computer

Scene Essentials

- The vessel's failing nerve centre.
- The investigators learn that the ship is doomed.
- The escape pods are the only way out.

Scene Details and Descriptions

As the investigators enter, their attention is drawn to the sounds of wires being pulled from sockets and circuit boards being smashed in half. One to four (Keeper's choice) mutants are hunched over, ripping the main computer apart. The computer is listing a series of malfunctions and questions, until (soon after the investigators enter) it begins to completely degrade into nonsense, for example:

"Error in primary resonance nodule. Error in secondary bi-pass structures. What are you doing to me ? Malfunction. Malfunction in internal relay analysis. Stop this! Mal... !"

Within moments of the investigators entering, the mutant(s) leaps over the beeping and whirring computer casing to attack, fighting until it is dead.

During the course of the fight, the computer begins a countdown to the ship's destruction, interspersed with warnings for the biological specimens to evacuate the vessel, for example:

The Escape Pods

Scene Essentials

- There are not enough functioning escape pods for all of the investigators.

Scene Details and Descriptions

Whilst the room does contain six escape pod access doors, two are locked (i.e. they have been used). That leaves four escape pods, but to make matters even worse, two of these have failed and won't work when operated.

The escape pods are cylindrical-shaped vessels, each containing space enough for only one person to stand. Think of the pods as long, thin metal cylinders, just big enough to fit a human inside.

It is simple enough to climb in and press the button to be ejected (which takes place about five seconds later). The pod makes a loud, metal turning on metal noise as it passes through the wall into the television studio and the last thing that the occupant is aware of is a funny smell.

Whilst in the tube, the investigators are drugged unconscious – to be awoken for the climax of the show shortly.

"Ten minutes and twenty seconds to self destruct. Warning! All biological specimens to proceed to the escape pods. It's all dark now. Nine minutes and fifty nine seconds to self destruct. Warning! I'm so cold. Jettisoning Upper Habitat Level in three minutes and two seconds. Warning! "

Whilst the exact time to destruction is left to the Keeper, the investigators should feel that they must get to the escape pods *now* or meet their certain death.

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

The Keeper should decide in advance which escape pod is which (2 work, 2 will fail, 2 won't open).

Some groups check all of the pods first, thereby realizing that two of the six won't open. Of course, this means that only four of the investigators can escape and survive. How the investigators decide who lives and who dies is up to them to work out – this usually involves a desperate fight! Imagine their surprise when two of the surviving four go on to realize that their pods don't work…

Finally, the situation should exist where two investigators are trapped in 'broken' escape pods, two have 'escaped' (and are now drugged unconscious), whilst the other two are possibly dead or 'trapped' onboard the ship.

At this point move swiftly onto **Part 3: Did you Suffer?**

Part 3: Did you Suffer?

Scene Essentials

- The 'game' is over, the investigators are now on stage before a live television audience.

Scene Details and Descriptions

The investigators wake up in a strange place; bright lights shine in their eyes and they can hear a crowd of people chanting and shouting.

As their vision becomes clearer an obnoxious television presenter looms over them, thrusting a large microphone into their faces:

"So tell me and your fans... did Little Sister make you suffer, pal, huh, did she, huh?"

Suggestions for Handling the Scene

Rearrange where your actual players are sitting in order to simulate the stage environment. Any players with living investigators who managed to escape in a pod are asked to sit to on one side, away from those whose characters died. Anyone who survived but didn't escape, sits alongside the 'winners'.

Try to make the most of this last scene, playing on the confusion of the players and playing-up the horrible show presenter. Play this out as you wish in the style of the most exploitative reality television show that you can imagine – praise the winners, mock the losers.

Award some prizes to those sad, low-lives who volunteered to become mutants on the show. Award those audience members who managed to score a hit upon an investigator with an exploding pod and those whose miscellaneous items were actually used by the investigators during the show.

Finally, award your players a round of applause and a large cup of tea (or a beer) for being such good sports.

Part 4: General Information

Overview of the Space Ship

The entire vessel is nothing more than a television studio construct, pertinent details follow:

The floors throughout are industrial metallic sheeting with embossed ridges. If these are somehow removed (this would be very difficult, requiring STR × 2 rolls and some sort of tool for leverage), they are found to be solid concrete underneath.

The walls are timber frames and plaster boards, covered in metal sheeting and given a smooth finish of white plastic-based paint. The paint could be scratched off and the metal sheet below could be punctured if hit hard enough with a pointed metal object, such as a screwdriver.

The doors slide into their frames and are driven by electric motors. There are no motion detectors – the doors are simply opened remotely by the studio crew who see everything on camera. Sometimes the crew get it wrong, causing investigators to walk into doors.

Generally, the set is well lit, with overhead lights mounted flush in the ceiling.

There are hidden cameras scattered throughout the ship. They are very small and will not be noticed unless the investigators specifically state that they are being searched for, requiring a Spot Hidden roll at –30%. Any that are actually discovered can be presented as internal ship monitors.

At various points around the 'ship' are concealed access hatches for the purpose of maintenance and to allow the studio crew to access to the set. If the set is breached, security doors (thick metal with bullet proof glass windows) can be closed. The tunnels are not marked on the Keeper's Map and may be placed as desired – even in the floor or ceiling.

Any time that the investigators encounter an external 'window' they are actually seeing a monitor screen showing a pre-recorded view of space.

Random Events and Slip-Ups

As the investigators explore the ship they may encounter things they were not intended to find. Perhaps they find signs inadvertently left by maintenance crew, such as muddy footprints where there were none before, spat out chewing gum, a pizza menu, a cigarette butt and so on.

The Mutants

Crazed, blood-thirsty and glory-hungry.

In reality, the mutants are nothing more than homeless and desperate people who have been given the chance of making a lot of money if they can kill an investigator on live television. These unfortunates have received major plastic surgery and genetically modified attachments, as well as drugs to inhibit pain – all of which essentially make them insane killers. Their key motivation is to kill someone and then hide, though they may forget the latter.

Their skin has been coloured green and is covered in circular welts. Their mouths are so full of sharp, pointed teeth that they can hardly close and any attempt at communication is lost as they unable to vocalize words. Their arms have been replaced with long octopus-like, sucker-covered tentacles that whip around maniacally. The mutants are naked and, if killed, exude a pod-like egg from their nether regions. If stamped upon, the eggs explode, possibly hitting a nearby investigator (30%, 1D4 damage).

It is left to the Keeper to determine the number of mutants as, in theory, the television studio can introduce more as they see fit.

STR 18 DEX 16 INT 110 CON 15
SIZ 14 APP 04 POW 13 EDU 00
SAN 0 Hit Points: 15
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 35%, Hide 50%, Jump 40%, Listen 35%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 30%

Weapons: 2 attacks with tentacles per round or 1 bite. Bite 20% – raises to 50% if victim is successfully Grappled (1D6), Tentacle Swipe 30% (1D4). Grapple 30%

SAN Loss: 1/D8

Keeper's Information: Pre-Generated Investigators (The Contestants)

Six pre-generated investigators follow. If you are playing the scenario with fewer players, allocate them in order (i.e. for four players use investigators 1 to 4) – whilst the remaining characters can be used as non-player characters or left out altogether.

Note that the background information on each investigator is provided for the Keeper's eyes only, but it can be fun to share this information with the players at the end of the scenario – quite possibly during Part 3.

The section labeled **Initial Information** is duplicated in the Player Handouts and should be copied and given to the players as they wake up at the start of the scenario.

Player 1: Jennifer Trump (Age 35)

Background Information

Jenny is a woman, despite what some of the inmates call her. She works as a prison warden and doesn't see why the prisoners should be the only ones to get the chance of making it on to the show.

Jenny is very opinionated and straight-talking. Her aim is to win through the show and make enough money to retire; she does what it takes to make sure that she wins.

The show has chosen her to take part in order to stir things up and as a potential 'hate' figure for the audience.

Initial Information

You are an overweight woman; however, you are very confident and you couldn't care less about what other people think you look like. Your brown hair is cut very short.

You are wary of others and slow to trust anyone's judgement other than your own. You have an urge to take control of the group and are sometimes quite tactless and impatience. You have a craving for sweet things.

STR 14 DEX 12 INT 12 CON 11
SIZ 16 APP 08 POW 11 EDU 14
SAN 55 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Bargain 20%, Computer Use 15%, Conceal 25%, Cookery 33%, Credit rating 25%, Dodge 24%, Drive 25%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 50%, Grapple 50%, Handgun 35%, Hide Law 35%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 30%, Martial Arts 10%, Nightstick 40%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Taser 50%, Track 25%, Throw 40%

Player 2: Jonathan Caddick (Age 31)

Background Information

Single with no living relations. Caddick is a criminal psychologist who believes that everyone has (somewhere within them) a good side and that the deeds that are often called 'evil' are the result of an ill mind. He has worked in various prisons and rehabilitation units, developing his theory that people condemned to death are capable of redemption. He has managed to get on to the show in order to demonstrate and test out his theory, and if successful he stands to win a book deal and substantial earnings.

As Caddick has a very pale, almost unhealthy appearance, he has (unknown to him) been given an all over fake tan so that he should appear 'more human' on television. The studio has selected him to take part as he's a nerd and should quickly clash with others, causing tension and excitement.

Initial Information

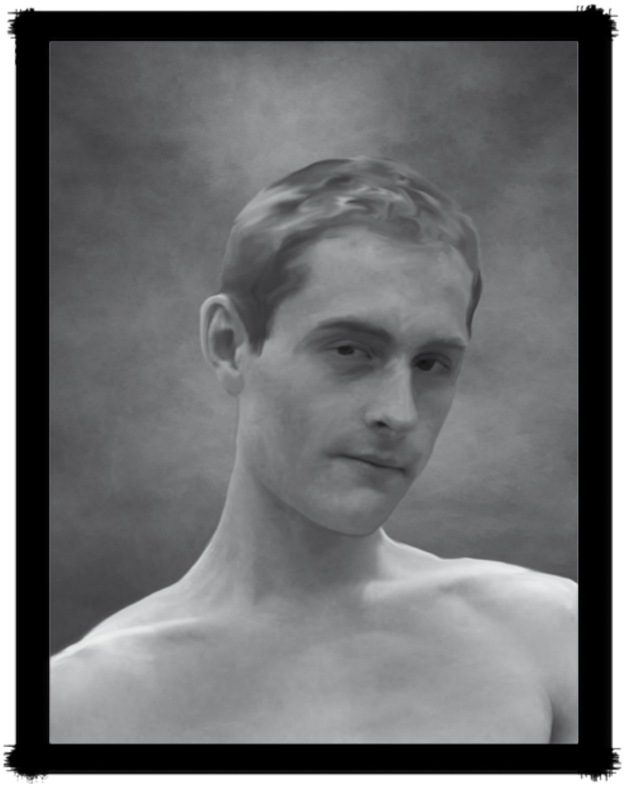
You are male, rather flabby but very well tanned. Your hair is shoulder-length but receding on top.

You feel vulnerable and perhaps cover this with false bravado. You would love a cigarette right now. There are raw patches on your finger tips that you find yourself biting when nervous or anxious.

STR 13 DEX 17 INT 13 CON 15
SIZ 13 APP 17 POW 12 EDU 18
SAN 60 Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Accounting 25%, Anthropology 30%, Drawing 25%, Bargain 15%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 50%, Dodge 22%, Drive 30%, Fast Talk 35%, Law 50%, Library Use 50%, Medicine 15%, Occult 15%, Other Language (French 30%, Latin 25%), Persuade 40%, Pharmacy 35%, Photography 30%, Psychoanalysis 50%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 30%, Swim 35%

Player 3: Joshua Balderstone (Age 29)



Background Information

A computer hacker imprisoned for breaking into a hospital security and information system, inadvertently causing the death of seven patients. Whilst Balderstone hadn't intended to kill anyone, he had been aiming to override the system so that some friends could break in and steal drugs. He now greatly regrets what happened, and despite being in prison for a long time he aims to show the world that he's not such a bad person after all. Should he win and receive an early release, he intends to donate a lump sum of cash to charity.

Joshua is on the show because he is a very sensitive and highly strung person that the audience might grow to like.

Keeper's Note: Joshua is a habitual drug user and may feel effects of withdrawal during the show – growing impatience, sudden anger and apathy. You should encourage and prompt this behaviour as the scenario progresses.

Initial Information

You are male, skinny and your hair is thinning. Your fingers are long and you have a habit of twitching them – you wish you could stop doing this.

You feel as if a weight has been lifted from your shoulders, leaving you light and happy. All is good with the world.

STR 14	DEX 12	INT 10	CON 15
SIZ 15	APP 08	POW 09	EDU 11
SAN 45		Hit Points: 15	

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Accounting 35%, Biology 35%, Computer Use 80%, Conceal 55%, Cryptography 35%, Dodge 40%, Electrical Repair 60%, Fast Talk 25%, Library Use 25%, Mechanical Repair 25%, Pharmacy 65%, Persuade 31%, Photography 55%, Physics 45%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 25%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Player 4: Michael Nash (Age 34)

Background Information

Nash was brought up in (and out of) care in rough neighbourhoods, leading to a life of crime. Heavily involved in guns and drugs, he was eventually caught and imprisoned on death row for the brutal murder of a female office worker who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Whilst not irrationally violent, Nash lives and dies by the code of the street, and he stands to win his life if he can win the game show – he would remain behind bars but that's better than execution.

The tattoo with the name 'Suzie' is not permanent and has been put on by the television company to cause confusion. The other tattoos are real, as are the scars.

The studio has chosen Nash as he is physically fit, prone to violence and might be seen by the audience as a 'love to hate' kind of guy.

Initial Information

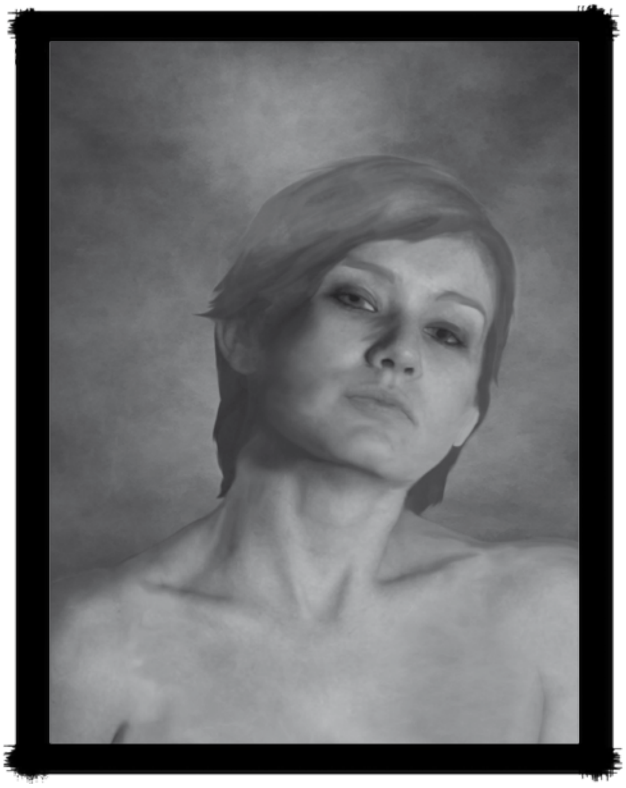
You are a muscular man and have many tattoos on your arms – depicting an oriental dragon, a skull with flames, a heart with the name 'Suzie' across it, a laughing devil and a .45 magnum handgun. Your hair is shaved and you have a moustache.

You are wary of others and feel that you should rely on your own talents, rather than be in debt to others. You may soon find that your animal instincts surface easily.

STR 13 DEX 14 INT 18 CON 09
SIZ 11 APP 15 POW 13 EDU 16
SAN 45 Hit Points: 10
Damage Bonus: none

Skills:
Climb 50%, Club 50%, Dodge 30%, Drive 60%, Fast Talk 40%, Fist 60%, Grapple 45%, Handgun 50%, Head Butt 35%, Hide 30%, Jump 35%, Kick 45%, Listen 35%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Occult 10%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Throw 35%

Player 5: Suzanna Hillmarton (Age 28)



Background Information

Suzie is a professional martial arts instructor, trained in numerous styles. She has a well-conditioned physique and strong self-discipline. Her interest in the show is in taking a challenge that can bring her fame and a lot of money.

The studio has selected Suzie on the criteria that she is a babe who can handle herself.

Initial Information

You are female, very attractive and have clear muscle definition on your forearms and abdomen. Your hair is shoulder length and blonde.

You are wary of others and you have an urge to take control of the group.

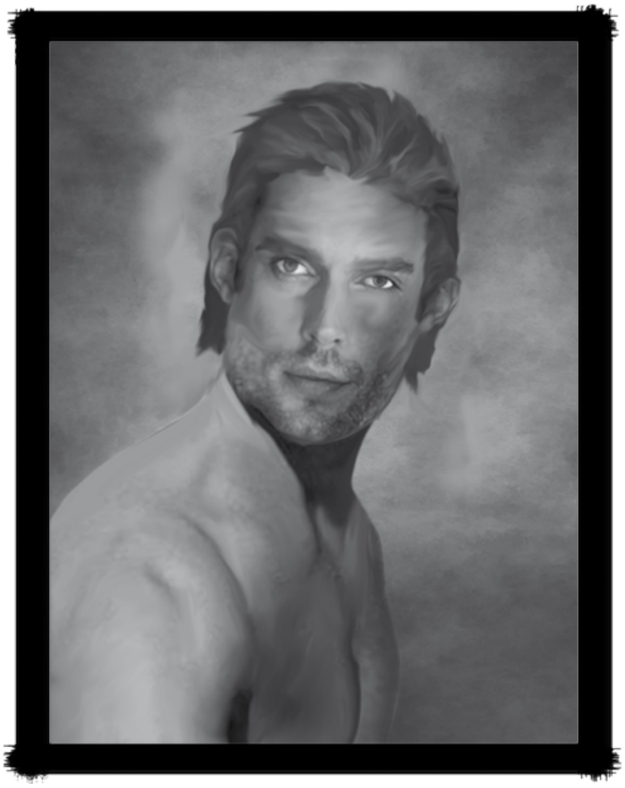
STR 14 DEX 16 INT 15 CON 10
SIZ 12 APP 18 POW 10 EDU 20
SAN 50 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

Skills:
Art (Dance) 35%, Climb 50%, Club 50%, Credit Rating 35%, Dodge 50%, Drive 25%, Fast Talk 25%,

First Aid 40%, Fist 70%, Fighting knife 40%, Hide 20%, Jump 50%, Kick 60%, Listen 35%, Martial Arts 50%, Medicine 15%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 35%, Throw 35%

Player 6: Thomas Hamilton (Age 19)

Background Information



Tom is a surfer who simply wants to make a load of money so that he can give up working in a fast food restaurant and surf all day to his heart's content.

The studio has selected him because he is good looking and he might 'go well' with Suzanna Hillmarton.

Initial Information

You are younger than the others, tall and slim. Your skin is tanned and tightly muscled. Your hair is short and bleached blonde.

You have a sense of humour that seems irrepressible and a very lazy attitude.

STR 15	DEX 14	INT 08	CON 14
SIZ 14	APP 16	POW 12	EDU 12

Inter-Character Knowledge

The players may become aware of these relationships through opening their memory envelopes. If any of them ask if they recognize anyone prior to receiving any memories, the Keeper may want to tell them who they recognize, but without giving any explanation – try as they might, they just cannot remember where they met before.

Jennifer Trump knows both Joshua Balderstone and Michael Nash and feels she should not trust them. She has also met Jonathan Caddick and seems to remember him being a soft liberal who needs a dose of reality.

Jonathan Caddick knows Michael Nash and is very afraid of him but strangely also wants to help him. He also knows Jennifer Trump and strongly dislikes her.

Joshua Balderstone knows Jennifer Trump and thinks she is a hard bitch.

Michael Nash knows Jonathan Caddick and believes him to be a soft liberal. He has also met Jennifer Trump, for whom he feels a degree of respect.

Suzanna Hillmarton knows Joshua Balderstone vaguely, (her father was one of those that died in the hospital due to Balderstone's crime and she saw him in court).

Thomas Hamilton knows no one (but may have false memory of being Jennifer's son).

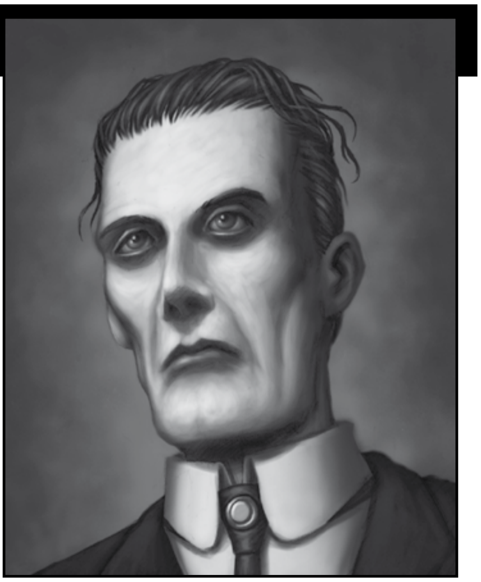
SAN 60 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Climb 50%, Dodge 28%, Drive 50%, Fast Talk 40%, Fist 55%, Grapple 30%, Hide 30%, Jump 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 25%, Photography 25%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Surfing 50%, Swim 62%, Throw 65%

Cthulhu Britannica

Appendix 1.1: Bad Company Pre-generated Characters

Aubrey Blande, esq. Age 33, Man About Town



STR 11 DEX 09 INT 14 CON 09
SIZ 13 APP 18 POW 13 EDU 14
SAN 65 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	[✓ 65]
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	[✓ 13]
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Art (Singing 40%), Bargain 37%, Boating 69%, Credit Rating 43%, Etiquette 31%, Fast Talk 53%, Gambling 45%, History 36%, Law 32%, Library Use 29%, Listen 46%, Other Language (French 24%, German 15%, Italian 12%), Persuade 58%, Psychology 21%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 53%, Throw 36%.

Weapons: Fist (60% +1D3), Fencing Foil 24% (1D6+1).

About You

You were never entirely cut out for the law, although the family firm beckoned you to its dusty chambers almost before you were born, and four generations have served Cross, Hawkwright and Sons with dry diligence and staid honour. Their financial success in times past, mediating in stolid disputes over matters of trade and commercial contract, are to be thanked for your education and position in society. However, even as a young man in college, your interests ran more to the card table and the music hall than to legal notices and the inertia of the Chancellery Court. Fortunately your wits are sharp and your gaming skills passable, and although you nominally hold the position of law-writer for the family business, your success at the tables means that you seldom have to draw on your small allowance – and your brother, Percival, is more than happy to grasp at the reins of the family practice, uncontested by your absence.

Your life has not been entirely plain sailing however, and you've skirted trouble and the taint of scandal on more than one occasion. You know full well that (to some of your more snobbish opponents at the tables of London's salons), your background makes you no more than a jumped-up clerk's son. Still, all the more the pleasure their ill-concealed scorn affords you when you clean them out —and all with the best possible bonhomie of course!

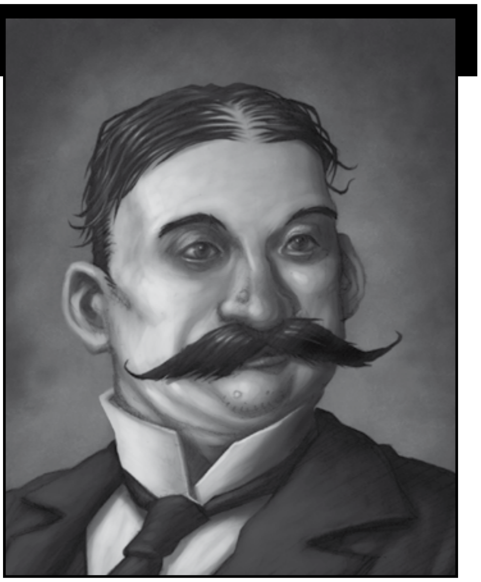
Arthur Sommers is one of those true sons of the aristocracy – with titled family and the wealth to back it up. Gracious in victory and defeat, both in society and at cards, you consider him a friend (if not a close one), and could count on him always for a civil reception and a good word – particularly after you taught him how to lose not quite so badly at the tables. Gossip recently has come to your ear that all is not well with Arthur and that he has been seen with a poor choice of companion. For his sake you hope nothing untoward comes of it.

Doctor James Whittles-Cole Age 32, Physician

STR 11 DEX 12 INT 15 CON 16
SIZ 12 APP 14 POW 11 EDU 23
SAN 55 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20



SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	[✓ 55]	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 38%, Anthropology 25%, Bargain 46%, Biology 60%, Chemistry 41%, Credit Rating 60%, Etiquette 55%, Fast Talk 20%, Forensics 40%, History 30%, Law 15%, Library Use 47%, Medicine 47%, Natural History 15%, Occult 15%, Other Language (French 14%, German 19%, Greek 10%, Latin 21%, Slovak 34%), Persuade 38%, Pharmacy 39%, Psychology 26%, Spot Hidden 43%.

Weapons: .25 Pistol 30% (1D6, 5 shots), Surgical Blade 34% (1D4+2+1D4).

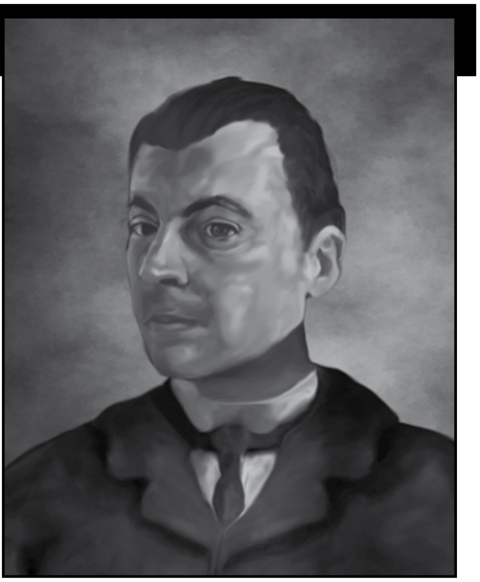
About You

You have studied and travelled widely in Europe and have spend time both among the rich and poor in pursuit of your education and private research (and have long learned how to fend for and defend yourself when needs be). Since your return to London, in order to look after your consumptive and somewhat dissolute younger brother Tobias, you have dabbled with the idea of becoming an Alienist, finding the complexities of the damaged mind quite fascinating.

The power your father and uncles wield within the City of London is well known and you certainly have never wanted for anything. Although your father's initial disappointment of your decision to forego a career in the family business caused some minor distress to your reputation, your tales of far travels and adventurous exploits have been welcomed by the London 'smart set' with open arms since your return. Your father and uncles have even extended a membership invitation to their club; thus your standing is more secure than ever.

You know Arthur Sommers only vaguely as a society friend of your, now bedridden, brother Tobias. Having met him several times at various functions and events, you have found him to be charming and courteous, if somewhat guileless and hardly the sharpest tool in the box. Recently Tobias has become troubled over him, hearing rumours that he has been drawn in with companions he is hardly equipped to deal with. For your brother's sake you are willing to look into the matter for him as he is in no fit state to do so himself.

Lawrence Clements-Downing Age 29, Academic



STR 09 DEX 11 INT 15 CON 12
SIZ 09 APP 12 POW 12 EDU 21
SAN 60 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS																
Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	[✓ 60]	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Architecture 36%, Archaeology 22%, Art (Creative Writing 44%, Fine Art 60%, Sculpture 37%), Bargain 47%, Biology 17%, Conceal 15%, Credit Rating 43%, Etiquette 27%, Fast Talk 25%, History 46%, Library Use 42%, Listen 29%, Occult 55%, Other Language (French 27%, Latin 28%, Dutch 17%), Persuade 37%, Psychology 26%, Sneak 15%, Spot Hidden 41%.

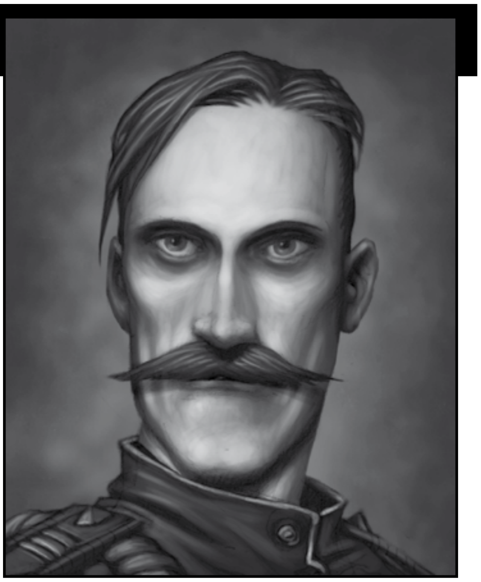
Weapons: None.

About You

You have always been a man of letters, your family are solid and unremarkable academics of sound background and sinecure. As a result, you were suited to follow in their footsteps, read history and theology at Oxford and settled into a quiet junior research fellowship at the Royal Anthropological Society after a season travelling the great cathedrals of Europe (following your graduation with honours). Somewhere along the way, strange fancies and certain macabre curiosities crept their way into your studies. You have been careful to hide your preoccupations and the subject of your private studies from your more judgemental and puritanical peers, lest your position be troubled by academic scandal. You have found yourself obsessed with matters esoteric and occult, with new sciences scoffed at by the staid intellegencia and phenomenon dismissed by others as impossible or inexplicable. You have made in depth studies of strange occurrences and curious lore, coming to the conclusion that the universe holds more wonders (and perhaps terrors), than your peers at the Society would ever credit. You have even had your work on such matters published several times (under pseudonym of course), in journals commonly discredited for their content by more traditional authorities. You have also, in more recent times, been drawn to the darker side of London life, convinced that beneath the façade of the great city, terrible truths and ancient secrets lurk. You know that you have increasingly began to court danger in your private pursuits and have already purchased several dubious objects and materials (whose provenance is best uncertain), from back-alley dealers – where you have risked more than the money in your wallet by seeking them out. Still, you must see, you must know and anything that can aid you in this end is more than worth pursuing.

You have been acquainted with Arthur Sommers, off-and-on, since your days at boarding school together. You maintained a friendship that has waxed and waned ever since. Most recently you saw him again a fortnight ago, one evening in Covent Garden, and were shocked in the transformation that seemed to have befallen him – he was a nervous wreck, speaking incoherently and almost feverish in his intensity. Afterward you were disturbed enough to compose a note to his father enquiring after Arthur's health.

Captain Marcus Lasher, (rt.) **Age 34,** Former Officer, British Army



STR 13 DEX 13 INT 12 CON 14
SIZ 14 APP 16 POW 12 EDU 16
SAN 60 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	[✓ 60]	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Bargain 30%, Boating 50%, Climb 42%, Credit Rating 23%, Dodge 46%, Fast Talk 39%, First Aid 35%, Geography 40%, Hide 20%, History 40%, Jump 30%, Mechanical Repair 38%, Occult 39%, Other Language (French 40%, Hindi 42%, Sufi 20%), Persuade 38%, Psychology 40%, Riding 51%, Sneak 24%.

Weapons: Cavalry Sabre 43% (1D8+1D4), Fist 66% (1D3+1D4), Grapple 60% (special), .452 Revolver 49% (1D10+2, 6 shots).

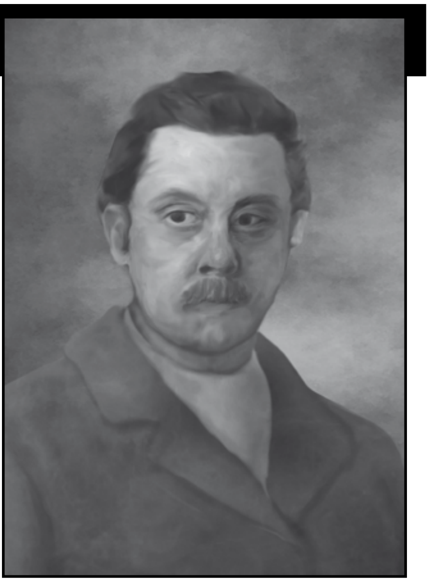
About You

It was with reluctance that you paid what little of your inheritance that was left, after settling you late father's debts, to purchase a commission in the army. What little cache remained attached to your family name at Horseguards was sufficient to see you relatively well positioned within a good regiment, and you found that you took to the pattern of a soldier's life with some ease, and all seemed well for a time. It was the boredom of barrack room and mess hall life where the problems started. The empty ritual and the indolence of your fellow officers began to grate and you took to drinking to pass the weary rounds of military functions and inaction – and when you drank, the 'bad' old family blood that you had tried so hard to deny, began to rear its head. After an incident in which a fellow junior officer was blinded in one eye, it was made plain to you that a transfer to another regiment would be your only option short of resignation, and before long you found yourself in the colonial forces in India, where your talents and inclinations were soon recognised and put to better and more practical use. You saw many strange and wonderful things in India in the four years you were stationed there (and would be there still if a bought of typhus you were lucky to survive had not seen you laid low and discharged from the army on grounds of ill-health). Returned to England about a year ago to convalesce, your health is now much improved but your personal finances are much depleted. You have found it difficult to truly 'fit in' in London and to find gainful employment befitting a man of your station. You greatly desire to build up a stake of money sufficient to see your return to the colonies as a trader and private adventurer, however, the more that time progresses, the less you are beginning to care how this can be achieved.

Although Arthur Sommers was a relatively recent acquaintance of no more than a few months, you became fast friends with the man several years younger than yourself. You found him somewhat naive but open and disarmingly good-natured. Arthur was always eager to hear your stories (somewhat edited for propriety of course), of your time in the Raj and he has been one of the few close acquaintances that you have developed here in London since your return. If, as the rumours have said, he has fallen foul of some villainous fate, you would personally like to take the matter up with those responsible and extract a measure of satisfaction from them.

Appendix 1.2: Darkness, Descending Pre-generated Characters

Professor McDuff **Age 56,** Professor of Archaeology



STR 11	DEX 09	INT 17	CON 12
SIZ 15	APP 12	POW 11	EDU 23
SAN 55		Hit Points: 14	
Damage Bonus: +1D4			

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS																
Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	[✓ 55]	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Description: Opinionated, with a reputation for being a bit of a bully.

Skills: Archaeology 71%, Craft (Art) 36%, Credit Rating 40%, Geology 32%, History 80%, Library Use 39%, Listen 29%, Natural History 15%, Occult 23%, Other Language – (Arabic 24%, Cuneiform 21%, French 44%, German 31%, Greek 43%, Latin 58%, Old English 42%), Persuade 30%, Psychology 10%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 53%.

Recent events:

The recent discovery of a curious statuette in the area of Soldier's Wood, south of the village of Middle Harling in Norfolk, has brought a team of archaeologists from Cambridge University to explore the area.

An advance team was sent to Middle Harling three weeks ago to determine whether there were grounds for a full-scale dig. The team, led by Professor Hubert Winstanley – Head of the Archaeology Department – quickly found evidence of a Roman villa and proceeded to ask the University to send more archaeologists to the site. You are part of the team sent by the university to supplement the initial survey.

Want you think about your colleagues:

May Fortescue – your secretary and clerk. Does a decent job. Always seems to be there when you need her.

Alexander Wright – stout fellow and a good graduate student, even if he does spend more time playing sports than studying. He'll do us proud at the next Olympics.

Rodney Waite-Fullerby – bit of a fop, but he seems agreeable enough.

Freida Goldstein – can't see why that fool Winstanley brought her along. Apparently she's quite an artist, but having a foreigner in the team! Whatever next?!

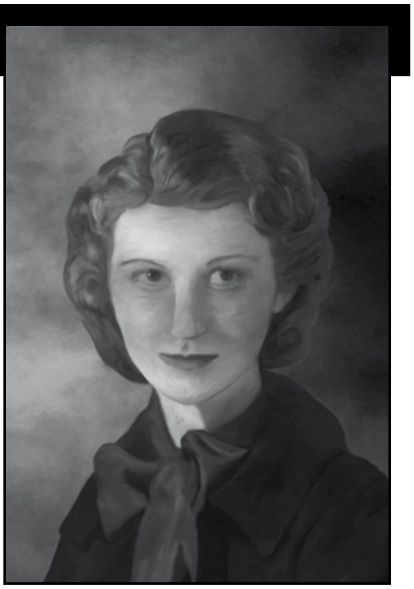
Arthur Ramsbothen – A sound help around the department, when he's not hung over.

Prof. Winstanley – old fool, he should have retired long ago. Half the time he can't even remember where he left his trowel, never mind actually finding anything of importance.

Prof. Watson – quiet and dedicated. Keeps himself to himself. He'll go far.

David Pitman – an able student and a worthwhile member of the faculty, he studied under you whilst an undergraduate.

Fredia Goldstein **Age 33,** Photographer and Artist



STR 11	DEX 09	INT 15	CON 12
SIZ 15	APP 17	POW 14	EDU 19
SAN 64		Hit Points: 14	

Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	[✓ 64]	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
[✓ 14]	15	16	17	18

Description: German born, however has lived in England for the last six years. Does not suffer fools gladly and knows exactly what she wants.

Skills: Art (Fine Art) 68%, Art (Sculpture) 36%, Bargain 42%, Credit Rating 16%, Fast Talk (in English) 26%, History 22%, Jump 35%, Listen 39%, Mechanical Repair 24%, Navigate 21%, Occult 31%, Other Language – (French 21%, German 95%, Dutch 13%, English 56%), Persuade 40%, Photography 52%, Psychology 29%, Ride 27%, Rifle 31%, Sneak 37%, Spot Hidden 53%, Swim 30%, Throw 27%.

Recent events:

The recent discovery of a curious statuette in the area of Soldier's Wood, south of the village of Middle Harling in Norfolk, has brought a team of archaeologists from Cambridge University to explore the area.

An advance team was sent to Middle Harling three weeks ago to determine whether there were grounds for a full-scale dig. The team, led by Professor Hubert Winstanley – Head of the Archaeology Department – quickly found evidence of a Roman villa and proceeded to ask the University to send more archaeologists to the site. You are part of the team sent by the university to supplement the initial survey.

Want you think about your colleagues:

Professor McDuff – bigoted old fool, the man is a frightful pain.

May Fortescue – quiet, if only she would stand up for herself. The perfect model of reserved Englishness.

Alexander Wright – a fine specimen of manhood. Very athletic, rows for the Cambridge team.

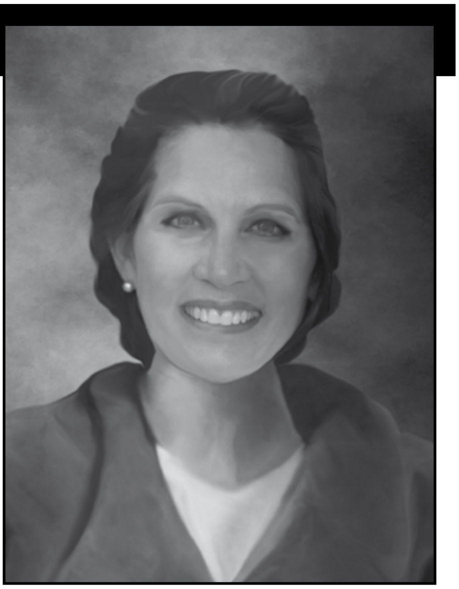
Rodney Waite-Fullerby – a mummy's boy, inexperienced. Bookish.

Arthur Ramsbothen – smells of whisky most of the time. Seems to get on well with the professors though.

Prof. Winstanley – hired you to be here; wants you to sketch the finds and take photographs of the dig.

Prof. Watson – he's a strange one, has a far away look in his eye. His minds definitely on other things – probably a women, it usually is.

May Fortescue **Age 24,** Secretary to Professor McDuff



STR 10 DEX 16 INT 17 CON 16
SIZ 13 APP 12 POW 09 EDU 15
SAN 64 Hit Points: 15
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14
[✓ 15]	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS																
Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	[✓ 64]	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
[✓ 9]	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Description: A little timid, but quite intelligent. Professor McDuff would be lost without her.

Skills: Accounting 72%, Archaeology 14%, Art (Music) 16%, Bargain 23%, Climb 42%, Conceal 35%, Credit Rating 16%, Fast Talk 10%, Hide 32%, History 22%, Library Use 49%, Listen 27%, Occult 17%, Other Language – (French 17%), Persuade 30%, Psychology 33%, Sneak 34%, Spot Hidden 61%, Swim 30%.

Recent events:

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Want you think about your colleagues:

Professor McDuff – your boss. What a horrible little man! A bully and a tyrant.

Alexander Wright – he'll not get far with that temper of his, always arguing with the professors, it's a wonder he's not been thrown out of the university. Maybe it has something to do with his being pencilled-in for the next Olympic team.

Rodney Waite-Fullerby – what a lovely man. Reserved and a proper gentleman.

Freida Goldstein – she's so confident. You wish you could be more like her.

Arthur Ramsbothen – horrid little man. Does little work around the college as he seems to spend most of his time in the pub.

Prof. Winstanley – a nice old man. He seems to have a terrible reputation with the students, but you've never any problems with him.

Prof. Watson – always studying and reading. I don't think he'd know what to do with a woman if he ever got close to one.

David Pitman – friendly young boy. Seems very dedicated.

Arthur Ramsbothen **Age 25,** Graduate Student

STR 14 DEX 10 INT 12 CON 15
SIZ 13 APP 12 POW 15 EDU 16
SAN 64 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

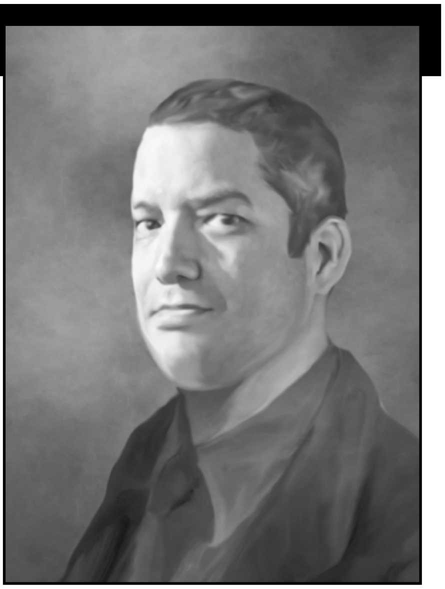
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	[✓ 64]	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	[✓ 15]	16	17	18



Description: Enjoys the comfortable life at university, hence why he's never left – in fact enjoys his drink perhaps a little too much.

Skills: Archaeology 44%, Art (Singing) 23%, Biology 21%, Chemistry 32%, Credit Rating 36%, Disguise 23%, Drive Auto 21%, Fast Talk 36%, Geology 19%, Hide 41%, History 30%, Library Use 29%, Navigate 26%, Other Language – (French 17%, German 05%, Greek 13%, Latin 25%, Old English 10%), Persuade 40%, Physics 23%, Psychology 10%, Sneak 21%, Spot Hidden 33%, Throw 27%.

Recent events:

The recent discovery of a curious statuette in the area of Soldier's Wood, south of the village of Middle Harling in Norfolk, has brought a team of archaeologists from Cambridge University to explore the area.

An advance team was sent to Middle Harling three weeks ago to determine whether there were grounds for a full-scale dig. The team, led by Professor Hubert Winstanley – Head of the Archaeology Department – quickly found evidence of a Roman villa and proceeded to ask the University to send more archaeologists to the site. You are part of the team sent by the university to supplement the initial survey.

Want you think about your colleagues:

May Fortescue – always helpful and she has a lovely smile. McDuff can be so beastly to her.

Alexander Wright – opinionated twit. Thinks brawn is mightier than the brain. He'll come a cropper one of these days.

Rodney Waite-Fullerby – nice chap, although a little odd. Likes books a bit too much.

Freida Goldstein – she's incredible attractive and has a wonderful husky voice. Perhaps you can persuade her to show you around Berlin sometime.

Professor McDuff – hateful man. Thinks shouting is the best way to teach someone about archaeology.

Prof. Winstanley – he really seems to know his stuff. It will be good to work with him at the dig.

Prof. Watson – what he doesn't know isn't worth knowing. Methodical and logical. A real inspiration.

David Pitman – I think he'd have been better suited as a priest. A very devout chap.

Alexander Wright **Age 23,** Undergraduate Student

STR 13	DEX 14	INT 13	CON 12
SIZ 13	APP 16	POW 14	EDU 15
SAN 64		Hit Points: 13	
Damage Bonus: +1D4			

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	[✓ 13]	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	[✓ 64]	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
[✓ 14]	15	16	17	18

Description: Sporty, rows for college. A winning smile and always has a lady on his arm.

Skills: Archaeology 24%, Bargain 09%, Biology 12%, Chemistry 16%, Climb 47%, Credit Rating 19%, Dodge 36%, Drive Auto 39%, Fast Talk 23%, Fist 67%, Grapple 43%, History 22%, Jump 30%, Library Use 26%, Navigate 26%, Other Language – (French 49%, Latin 04%), Persuade 20%, Pilot (Boat) 65%, Psychology 10%, Ride 49%, Rifle 46%, Shotgun 46%, Sneak 25%, Swim 69%, Throw 58%.

Recent Events:

The recent discovery of a curious statuette in the area of Soldier's Wood, south of the village of Middle Harling in Norfolk, has brought a team of archaeologists from Cambridge University to explore the area.

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Want you think about your colleagues:

May Fortescue – McDuff's secretary, very organised and very quiet.

Professor McDuff – a great man who knows his mind.

Rodney Waite-Fullerby – spends all his time dreaming of the pyramids. Odd sort, prefers books to people.

Freida Goldstein – comes from Germany, apparently she's a renowned artist.

Prof. Winstanley – about time he retired and made way for McDuff to take over the department. Blundering old fool.

Prof. Watson – spends too much time up to arms in dirt and his head in the clouds. You've heard he's very ambitious.

David Pitman – good Christian fellow, regular churchgoer.

Rodney Waite-Fullerby **Age 21** , Undergraduate Student

STR 15 DEX 11 INT 13 CON 14
SIZ 15 APP 12 POW 12 EDU 15
SAN 64 Hit Points: 15
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14
[✓ 15]	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	[✓ 64]	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13
14	15	16	17	18

Description: A pacifist and regarded as a "bit strange" by fellow students.

Skills: Archaeology 37%, Art (Fine Art) 13%, Art (Music) 21%, Anthropology 24%, Biology 26%, Chemistry 29%, Credit Rating 12%, Fast Talk 15%, Geology 28%, Hide 36%, History 31%, Library Use 39%, Listen 40%, Occult 16%, Other Language – (French 21%, German 30%, Greek 10%, Latin 12%), Persuade 31%, Psychology 36%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 34%.

Recent events:

The recent discovery of a curious statuette in the area of Soldier's Wood, south of the village of Middle Harling in Norfolk, has brought a team of archaeologists from Cambridge University to explore the area.

An advance team was sent to Middle Harling three weeks ago to determine whether there were grounds for a full-scale dig. The team, led by Professor Hubert Winstanley – Head of the Archaeology Department – quickly found evidence of a Roman villa and proceeded to ask the University to send more archaeologists to the site. You are part of the team sent by the university to supplement the initial survey.

Want you think about your colleagues:

Professor McDuff – hard working, taught you all you know.

May Fortescue – quiet lady, always very helpful and polite.

Alexander Wright – a bully and a cad. Complete rotter!

Freida Goldstein – it will be wonderful to have someone around who speaks German – a chance to practice your language skills. She's a real fox too.

Arthur Ramsbothen – a drunk and a bore. How he's been kept around is anyone's guess.

Prof. Winstanley – very shrewd fellow, although he and McDuff don't always seem to get along.

Prof. Watson – a brilliant archaeologist. He'll be famous some day.

David Pitman – a devout and honest man. Always ready to lend a helping hand.

Appendix 1.3: Wrong Turn Pre-generated Characters

Simon Court **Age 32,** Television Producer

STR 12	DEX 13	INT 13	CON 10
SIZ 13	APP 14	POW 12	EDU 13
San: 60		Hit Points: 12	
Damage Bonus: +1D4			

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	[✓ 60]	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 30%, Art (Audio-visual production) 40%, Bargain 40%, Computer Use 33%, Conceal 20%, Dodge 30%, Drive Auto 55%, Fast Talk 43%, Hide 20%, History 26%, Listen 35%, Persuade 54%, Pharmacy 22%, Photography 28%, Psychology 32%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 33%, Throw 30%.

About You

The *Moonstone* pilot is your big chance. You have worked hard to get where you are today and no one is going to jeopardise it. Head office has sent this self-aggrandised cow, Katherine Belmarsh, to question your idea and keep an eye on you. You have produced real programs for television – you are a media professional! What the hell does she know? But you will be charm itself – a bit of flattery and pandering has always helped to sort out this kind of thing before. Inviting Belmarsh on the Lordsdown overnight recce was a stroke of genius – that will show her what a tough, gritty professional you are. You have got Trevor Green coming along to do the technical bits and he knows what he is doing (and where his place is), even if he is a morose bugger. Better not to say that you would normally have just sent Trevor off for an afternoon on his own – after all, a night shoot recce is so much more cutting edge.

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: "It's all a load of tosh and hand waving designed to make bad TV and fleece old women out of their savings."

Niki Wong **Age 23,** Technician

STR 11	DEX 14	INT 15	CON 13
SIZ 11	APP 11	POW 12	EDU 16
San: 60		Hit Points: 12	
Damage Bonus: none			

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	[✓ 60]	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Art (Audio-visual production) 23%, Bargain 20%, Chemistry 36%, Computer Use 53%, Conceal 30%, Dodge 32%, Electrical Repair 48%, Electronics 36%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 30%, First Aid 35%, Law 10%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 39%, Persuade 27%, Photography 40%, Physics 30%, Psychology 22%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Lighting Engineering 45%.

About You

You have had enough, more than enough in fact. Four years of university and for what? Some times you wish you had gone out and done more – after all, where did all that work and those grades get you – being a glorified secretary to that 'clown' Simon Court. How on earth did anyone let him get where he is in the business? The man is not just incompetent but a genuine liability. After this trip you are gone – that job offer came in the nick of time. You have just to be careful until you get back and can hand your notice in. You still need a good reference!

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: "Difficult to make a clear judgement either way. Most of what people seem to talk about is obviously spurious – but one should never put a boundary on the possibilities of nature."

Michael Vince **Age 22, Junior** Technician

STR 13 DEX 10 INT 12 CON 13
SIZ 13 APP 11 POW 09 EDU 13
San: 45 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	[✓ 13]	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	[✓ 45]	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
[✓ 9]	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Astronomy 30%, Art (Audio-visual production) 25%, Art (Scriptwriting) 18%, Climb 56%, Computer Use 33%, Dodge 22%, Drive Auto 40%, Electrical Repair 30%, Electronics 33%, Listen 33%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Navigate 23%, Photography 30%, Physics 34%, Psychology 12%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 27%, Throw 34%.

About You

This is it! You have done it! You knew you could do it! You have only been with Red Rose Media for a week and you're going on a night shoot recce with Simon Court, the Senior Producer! It's going to be great – cameras, lighting, sound samples – just how you always imagined. Niki said that the Head of Commissioning was coming too! Maybe you could show her one of your scripts. Oh this is so great!

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: "Never really thought about it, but you have to believe the evidence of your own eyes don't you?"

Trevor Green **Age 44,** Visual Engineer

STR 12 DEX 13 INT 12 CON 14
SIZ 14 APP 10 POW 11 EDU 14
San: 55 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	[✓ 55]	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Art (Audio-visual production) 45%, Art (Fine Art) 31%, Computer Use 31%, Craft (Graphic Design) 39%, Dodge 26%, Drive Auto 47%, Electrical Repair 45%, Electronics 38%, Listen 30%, Locksmith 34%, Mechanical Repair 42%, Navigate 23%, Operate Heavy Machinery 25%, Photography 50%, Psychology 28%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 38%.

About You

You have been in the media ‘game’ for a long time and, to you, this jaunt out to Lordsdown looks just like what experience has taught you to expect – an attempt for Mr Court to make himself look good in front of the powers-that-be. Of course he is the boss, so what he says goes. Now if anyone had asked you (which they didn’t), you would have told them that you and Danny (good lad Danny), could get all they need in an afternoon with a hand held and a laptop at a fraction of the cost. Doesn’t matter though because this thing is more a shine-job than real fieldwork – all about making Mr Court look good. Fair enough, you’ll keep your head down and get on with it. That’s what you always do.

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: “Not worth thinking about really, hardly important in the grand scheme of things, eh?”

Daniel "Danny" Morris **Age 29,** Sound Technician

STR 09 DEX 15 INT 11 CON 11
SIZ 11 APP 12 POW 10 EDU 14
San: 50 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	[✓ 50]	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	[✓ 10]	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

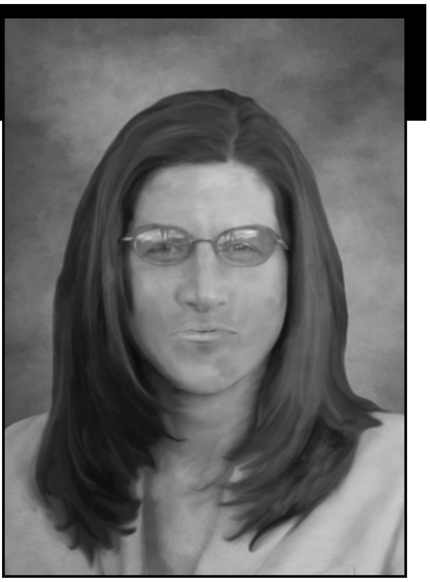
Skills: Art (Audio-visual production) 25%, Bargain 18%, Climb 55%, Computer Use 45%, Dodge 35%, Drive Auto 38%, Electrical Repair 30%, Electronics 45%, Geology 20%, Fast Talk 27%, Listen 30%, Photography 40%, Psychology 12%, Sneak 17%, Spot Hidden 40%, Sound Engineering 55%.

About You

You really wish that the Lordsdown recce wasn't going to be an overnight thing. You spoke with Trevor and he agreed that it should only have taken the two of you an afternoon and that you did not need to work all through the night. You wish you had spoken up and said something about it, but Mr Court keeps saying how important it is. Trevor said that it was all "political" – a job to make Court look good in the eyes of his bosses. You weren't going to say anything anyway, not with how Mr Court can *be* sometimes.

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: "I don't even like ghost stories! I don't like to think about that kind of thing too much, gives me nightmares."

Katherine Belmarsh **Age 38,** Division Manager with responsibility for New Program Commissioning



STR 11 DEX 11 INT 16 CON 13
SIZ 11 APP 13 POW 14 EDU 14
San: 70 Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	[✓ 12]	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	[✓ 70]	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
[✓ 14]	15	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 40%, Art (Audio-visual production) 31%, Bargain 45%, Computer Use 28%, Dodge 30%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 33%, First Aid 40%, History 30%, Law 13%, Library Use 40%, Listen 37%, Persuade 52%, Photography 38%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%.

About You

This whole thing is a waste of time. Couldn’t the two techies, Danny and Trevor, stay overnight and do the recce?! They seem competent enough. The rest are a bunch of idiots and Simon Court is simply the worst. This *Moonstone* remake is a shocking idea and this trip out for nighttime trial shoots and sound tests is just throwing money down the drain. If your boss had not said to “go softly” you would have crushed it already but instead you have to spend a night in a dank old relic of the cold war, while Court dances around trying to impress you. Well he had better enjoy it because it will be the last time that Red Rose picks up the tab for his ego trip. Hopefully you can gather enough evidence during the trip on Court to end his days at Red Rose...

Your approach to the abnormal and supernatural: “Utter rubbish. Anyone who believes ghosts is a moron.”

Appendix 1.4: King Pre-generated Characters

Benjamin Cripps **Age 31,** Newspaper Critic

STR 10 DEX 12 INT 17 CON 11
SIZ 14 APP 11 POW 15 EDU 15
SAN 75 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: none

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	[✓ 13]	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS																
Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	[✓ 75]	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	[✓ 15]	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 20%, Art (Painting) 55%, Art (Singing) 55%, Bargain 45%, Climb 40%, Computer Use 36%, Conceal 50%, Dodge 29%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 50%, Fist/Punch 60%, Hide 20%, Library Use 60%, Listen 27%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Other Language – (German 61%), Persuade 45%, Psychology 35%, Sneak 15%, Spot Hidden 53%.

About You

You work for the Surrey Herald newspaper as its resident Arts Critic. As part of your job you get to see a lot of different artistic shows, from exhibitions of fine art, singing and drama.

You recently saw a truly awful production of Shakespeare's King Lear, with one David Norton in the lead role. The performance was terrible and you did a complete hatchet job in the review. You would be surprised if the pathetic lead actor ever trod the boards again, thankfully. What was worse was the way he got drunk at the post first night party and started criticising you (of all people!) He's not the first 'artist' that has suffered from one of your reviews – and he won't be the last!

You enjoy playing poker and, whilst you'd never admit it, you have a gambling addiction. You also enjoy a drink or two.

Recently you underwent a minor operation for an eye complaint and in the last couple of weeks you have been an outpatient at the Bethesda Hospital, under the care of Doctor Funikoshi.

Caroline Hallott-Chaplin **Age 23,** Accountant

STR 08 DEX 09 INT 18 CON 08
SIZ 09 APP 15 POW 16 EDU 17
SAN 80 Hit Points: 09
Damage Bonus: –1D4

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
[✓ 9]	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS															
Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	[✓ 80]	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	15	[✓ 16]	17	18

Skills: Accounting 70%, Bargain 55%, Climb 40%, Computer Use 46%, Conceal 50%, Credit Rating 65%, Dodge 25%, Fast Talk 60%, First Aid 40%, Fist/Punch 65%, Hide 50%, Kick 35%, Library Use 55%, Law 50%, Listen 53%, Natural History 20%, Other Language – (French 15%, Latin 21%), Persuade 45%, Psychology 53%, Sneak 15%, Spot Hidden 53%, Throw 30%.

About You

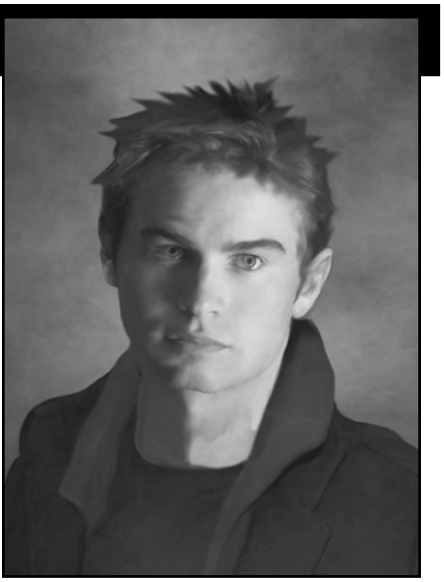
You are a staunch feminist. For you, it is the primary outlook on life and you feel confident in asserting your views whenever and wherever necessary. Naturally, you are politically active.

You don't currently have a partner and enjoy your independence. You do have a dog, named 'Saxon', who you adore.

Your work as a private accountant ensures that you get to meet a wide range of people from all walks of life – the self-employed, small and large business people, even actors.

Recently you underwent a minor operation for an eye complaint (corneal edema) and in the last couple of weeks you have been an outpatient at the Bethesda Hospital, under the care of Doctor Funikoshi. Apart from hating hospitals, you seem to be recovering well.

David Norton **Age 30,** Actor



STR 17 DEX 14 INT 15 CON 11
SIZ 11 APP 15 POW 10 EDU 15
SAN 50 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	[✓ 11]	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	[✓ 50]	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	[✓ 10]	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Art (Drama) 65%, Art (Singing) 23%, Bargain 35%, Club 40%, Conceal 30%, Credit Rating 19%, Disguise 51%, Fist/Punch 55%, Hide 34%, History 45%, Library Use 55%, Listen 32%, Occult 20%, Persuade 50%, Photography 45%, Psychology 60%, Sneak 42%, Spot Hidden 26%, Throw 38%.

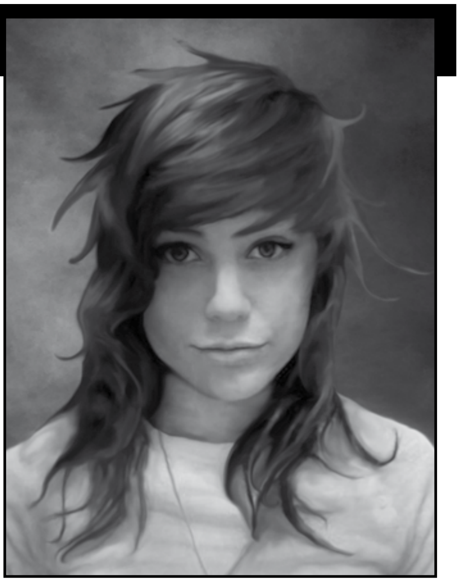
About You

You are a jobbing actor, working your way to fame through (mainly) low-key roles in regional theatres. Occasionally you have the chance to shine when a leading role comes your way.

Recently you took the plum role of King Lear, however your performance was heavily (and unfairly, in your opinion) criticised by a local critic named Ben Cripps. You are still wondering how much damage the poor review will do to your career.

Last year you had another set back, the accountant (a Caroline Chaplin), that you had used to file your tax return, lost you a lot of money. Whilst you could never prove anything, you feel sure that the tax return was incorrect. Since then, you've had a hard time recovering financially. Luckily your health insurance paid for your recent eye operation for allergic conjunctivitis at the Bethesda private hospital.

Stephanie Ptraci **Age 33,** Computer Games Designer



STR 13 DEX 14 INT 17 CON 15
SIZ 13 APP 15 POW 09 EDU 20
SAN 45 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	[✓ 45]	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
[✓ 9]	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 40%, Art (Computer Design) 64%, Computer Use 81%, Electrical Repair 42%, Fast Talk 20%, Fist/Punch 70%, Hide 46%, History 40%, Kick 53%, Library Use 30%, Law 40%, Listen 20%, Occult 45%, Other Language – (Arabic 14%, French 40%, Greek 23%, Latin 18%), Persuade 55%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 47%.

About You

From bedroom to boardroom, you've made it your sole purpose in life to be a games designer. Long hours in your youth, playing on old computers and consoles seems to have finally paid off – you now run your own games studio with Clive Peeters, your business partner. Your studio (called 'Insane Games'), is on the verge of a major deal with a very large publisher. You are very, very excited by this.

In what little spare time you have, you enjoy going to the gym and kickboxing. You don't currently have a partner, having split with last boy friend some months ago.

You've been suffering from 'dry eye' (it was probably all down to work, staring at monitors all day and night), and have recently undergone a minor operation on your eyes to sort the problem out. Following the operation, you've been in the care of Doctor Funikoshi, who seems to think that you're on your way to a full recovery.

Shannon Beaton-Taylor **Age 36,** Author

STR 15 DEX 09 INT 17 CON 08
SIZ 17 APP 10 POW 10 EDU 17
SAN 50 Hit Points: 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS

D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	[✓ 13]	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS

Insane		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	[✓ 50]	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS

U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	[✓ 10]	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Accounting 20%, Archaeology 11%, Art (Drawing) 40%, Bargain 45%, Chemistry 21%, Computer Use 33%, Craft (Wood Turning) 26%, Dodge 20%, First Aid 52%, Fist/Punch 54%, Grapple 35%, Hide 50%, History 45%, Library Use 45%, Listen 60%, Occult 20%, Other Language – (French 51%, German 31%, Latin 46%, Old English 12%), Psychology 55%, Sneak 12%, Spot Hidden 33%.

About You

You write science fiction and children's stories for a living. You've been doing this for the last six years, before that you had a succession of dead end jobs that paid the bills and allowed you to focus on your writing. So far, you've had the most success in getting your children's stories published (*"The Terror from the Swamp"* is your best selling 'teens' title), although you dream of being taken seriously for your science fiction work. At the moment you're close to finishing what you consider as your best work, an adventure set in a parallel dimension called *"Terror from the Fourth Dimension"*.

Your last published science fiction book (*"The Orion Terror"*), was not well received by the local newspaper critic, a 'cretin' named Ben Cripps, who completely slated the novel.
In recent months you've been suffering from a minor eye complaint, nothing too serious but it did require you to have an operation on your cornea. Since then you've been under the care of doctor Funikoshi as an outpatient at the Bethesda Hospital.

Derek Welham-O'Connell **Age 29,** Lawyer

STR 14 DEX 10 INT 16 CON 12
SIZ 09 APP 09 POW 10 EDU 22
SAN 55 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

HIT POINTS					
D	-2	-1	0	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	[✓ 14]
15	16	17	18	19	20

SANITY POINTS															
Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54	[✓ 55]	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

MAGIC POINTS				
U	0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	[✓ 10]	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18

Skills: Bargain 32%, Computer Use 36%, Conceal 45%, Craft (Cookery) 51%, Credit Rating 55%, Fast Talk 46%, First Aid 35%, Fist/Punch 51%, Law 75%, Library Use 70%, Listen 55%, Other Language – (French 49%, Italian 23%, Latin 18%), Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 30%.

About You

You live a comfortable life; you always have, as your family is rather wealthy. From public school, through Cambridge University, to the law firm of Wisscott, Mathers and Royce, your journey has been a pleasurable one.

You are success driven and very ambitious. You would describe yourself as 'witty, smart and keen', others might call you 'snide, aggressive and a user' – but they are all jealous of you of course!

You use people to get what you want. It works for you. This includes colleagues, girlfriends (you have many), and anyone who can be a stepping-stone for your ambition.

You've been attending a private hospital as an outpatient for a minor eye complaint – you somehow tore your eyelid whilst out on a drunken binge. Your doctor, a chap called Funikoshi, seems to think that you're on the mend though.

Appendix 2.1: Bad Company Player Handouts

Player Handout 1: The Blackmail Note

Sir,

I know where your son is and the terrible scandal and danger into which he has fallen

Only I can help you find him and save your name and fortune

Only what I can tell you can SAVE his life

For proof find enclosed his apartment key which he entrusted to me in good faith

Send your agent to meet me with the sum of one thousand pounds in notes in a carpet bag to Hobbs End Station and wait on the platform tomorrow after the 5pm train has departed and I will make myself known to him and provide him with all you need to know

Your son's life hangs in the balance

Your friend

Player Handout 3: Maxwell's Confession

NOTE: WRITTEN IN DRIED BLOOD

I have seen her her **Chernabog** call her I have seen dear god what I have seen red and gold and the workings of man stripped down to the base flesh we are all dirt dirt inside and filled with emptiness and sweet red longing **Chernabog** watches us rutting like beasts and hungers for the dirt inside us with his black kisses black god the old ones knew him and now I have seen and cannot unsee him she is his bride I think his daughter wife crone mother feeder whore with her bloody pits and need I cannot escape true face in red red red **Chernabog** dear god I she am lost what have I done to deserve this what did they make me do I woke today to find I have lost she was dead next to me all gone to rots of dear god I have done this must make remake the three stop me me please red sleeper waits like Wilde more that he knew was true image is truth outside **Chernabog** waits mankind nothing but a tide of meat touching my soul black and shriving must paint things I see crawl behind my eyes mad now I not little lost Max oh god what have I done where is the rest of her god-by Max gone to dirt forever more

Amen

Player Handout 2: Arthur's letter

To Arthur Sommers esq.

Sir, know that your sins have found you out.

Surely not even the wiles of so beautiful a creature can have blinded you to the depths to which she has had you sink for her amusement or to the terrible danger you are now in.

If you have no care for your own life and reputation, then what of that of your father and your family? Would you have them smeared with the taint and filth of what you have become? Would you have your family's good name become a byword for licentiousness and sin? Are you so base as to ignore what such a scandal would do?

Unless you wish for all the dreadful consequences of your actions to come to pass and your worst fears to be realised, you must do as I say.

Only I can save you, only I can make the scales fall from your eyes and see the way clear to for you to make amends. Only I can save your life.

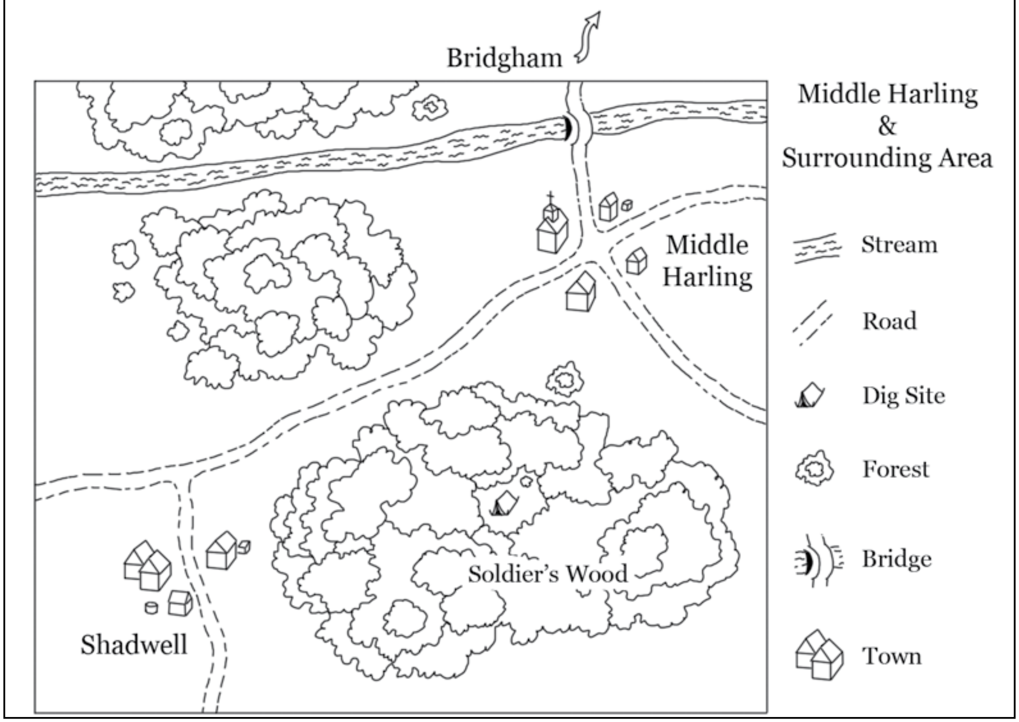
Go to Purbrights the pawnbrokers on Fall Row in Limehouse, and ask for the man Jakeswill there, he will instruct you further how to contact me,

Go Soon if you value your life and your family's Name.

Your Friend, S.

Appendix 2.2: Darkness, Descending Player Handouts

Player Map: Middle Harling and surrounding area



Player Handout 1

Folk Tales of Thetford, A.A. Wilson, published 1908 by The Norfolk Press

One area often brought up in conversation by the local residents is Soldier's Wood, near Bridgham. Two hundred years ago, Thomas Wilkes, an infamous local poacher, claimed to have heard fairy song in the wood whilst returning from setting some snares. On investigating, Wilkes stated to a disbelieving audience in the Red Lion public house that he had been taken to the Fairy realm and shown great secrets. Publicly ridiculed by the patrons of the Red Lion, Wilkes reportedly went berserk and stabbed the landlord to death, a well-liked fellow called Bill Cosper. Wilkes was subsequently tried and hanged for murder. The villagers of Middle Harling have reported seeing Wilkes' ghost in Soldier's Wood from time to time. Locals say the ghost seeks to lead unwary travellers to the land of Fairy.

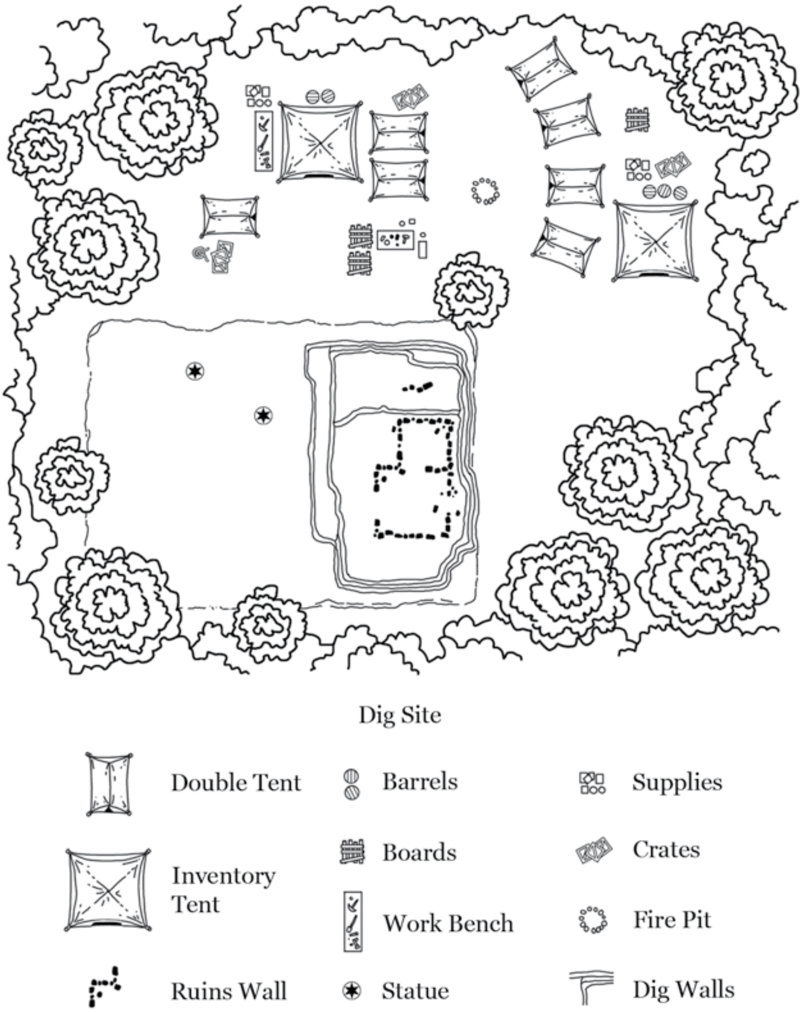
Player Handout 2

Great Walks of Norfolk, Roderick Pinder-Mandleby, published 1889 by Western Book Association

One may discover a hidden treasure of a walk in the quaint, yet delightful village of Middle Harling. The walk follows the old poacher's trail from Middle Harling through Soldier's Wood to Shadwell.

Soldier's Wood is so known due to a 16th Century dispute settled by an unnamed soldier in the service of the King. During the Autumnal Equinox, the gentlemanly soldier rescued a pretty girl, called Mary Young, who was being set upon by a band of cutthroats. In rescuing the girl, the soldier killed all four of the vagabonds. On returning to Middle Harling with the girl, the soldier was hailed as a hero and the local wood was so duly named.

Player Map: The Dig Site



Player Handout 4

Equinox

EQUINOX, pronounced EE-kwuh-nahks, is either of the two days of the year when the sun is directly above the earth's equator. At these times, the days and nights are of nearly equal length everywhere on the earth. The term equinox comes from a Latin word meaning equal night. In the Northern Hemisphere, the March equinox marks the start of spring and is often called the vernal equinox. The position of the vernal equinox is called the first point of Aries. The word vernal means of spring. The September equinox marks the beginning of autumn and is called the autumnal equinox.

Equinox is a word derived from two Latin words, aequus (equal) and nox noctis (night). At the equinoxes all over the planet the length of the day equals the length of the night. The two points at which the ecliptic meets the celestial equatorial plain and where the sun, in its annual cycle moving along the ecliptic, crosses over them. The passage from one season to another is mirrored in the passage of the seasons of the soul.

Player Handout 3

Witch Cults of Middle Europe, L. Hanskoff, published 1891 by Phage

The cult of Freihausgarten worshipped 'The Waiting Dark', a fell beast who lived in the hill beyond the village, bound in by watchers known as Vaeyen. Removal or misplacement of the five bat-like idols released the beast, who would unleash a terrible wrath of living darkness.

"Irgendwo, auf einem einsamen Platz, Wo Sie niemals bleiben wolten, Irgandwann, in diesen leeren Raum, Werden Sie einnen Weg finden, Das Pfad im Dunkeln, Und Dunkeln, ist mien name."

Keepers Note on Handout 3

A German Language Skill success translates the text as:

"Somewhere, in a lonely place, Where you would never want to stay, Somewhere, in that hollow space, There you will find a way, A way into darkness, And Darkness, my name is."

A Cthulhu Mythos success identifies the *The Waiting Dark* as references to the Great Old One Cyaegha. A god of dark places, caverns who, when awoken, is brought to terrible wrath and destruction.

Player Handout 5

The Autumnal Equinox

The Autumnal Equinox, or Mabon in pagan terms, is the celebration of harvest, a time to reflect on the successes of the fading year, those chapters of our lives that are coming to a close. We celebrate both the abundance of the earth, as well as the abundance in our lives, giving thanks for what we have received during the Wheel of the Year as the Oak King begins to make his descent into the underworld.

In the divine myth, the gates of the underworld open to accept the Oak King on Samhain (October 31st). In many traditions, this was the time of year that all spirits entered the afterlife. A time to say a final goodbye to family members and friends that have died during the previous year, as well as a time to give thanks to the animal world for the meat that we eat.

Player Handout 6

There are five. Five gaolers charged to guard the place and the Darke. To keep Him in His Darkness eternal. Know these as Vaeyen, the soul stones.

Guardian spirits bound in to the statues of winged demons? Why here?

Came upon strange passage within unknown text dated 1667. Not English – language unsure? Will transpose here as I fear the original manuscript will perish before too long:

Ya na kadishtu nilgh'ri stell-bsna Cyaegha; K'yarnak phlegethor lebumna syha'h n'ghft. Ya hai kadishtu ep r'luh-eeh Cyaegha eeh, S'uhn-ngh athg l'hee orr'e syha'h.

– Handwritten notes found tucked inside the journal of Reverend Peter Greap, dated 1842.

Player Handout 7

My mind is in turmoil, oh woe. My faith must shield me from the Adversary's fires of pain and misery. My worst beliefs are come true! The village is in league with Him – their souls damned to purgatory, no respite shall they have. This very night I bear witness to unholy sights as the pagans danced and swayed in an ungodly manner within the wood, celebrating the heathen practices of the equinox.

Hideous acts of depravity I witnessed, I pray to God that my mind not be fouled with the seed of Satan. Before mine eyes, the miserable wretches cavorted and called forth a black myst that did offend the eye of God. The myst did have a life unto itself! Oh woe is me! A very demone of styx.

My strength leaves me. Where is my Lord? I grow weary. I pray that my Lord will bless me with strength enough to leave this cursed place.

I fear they know and will come soon for me.

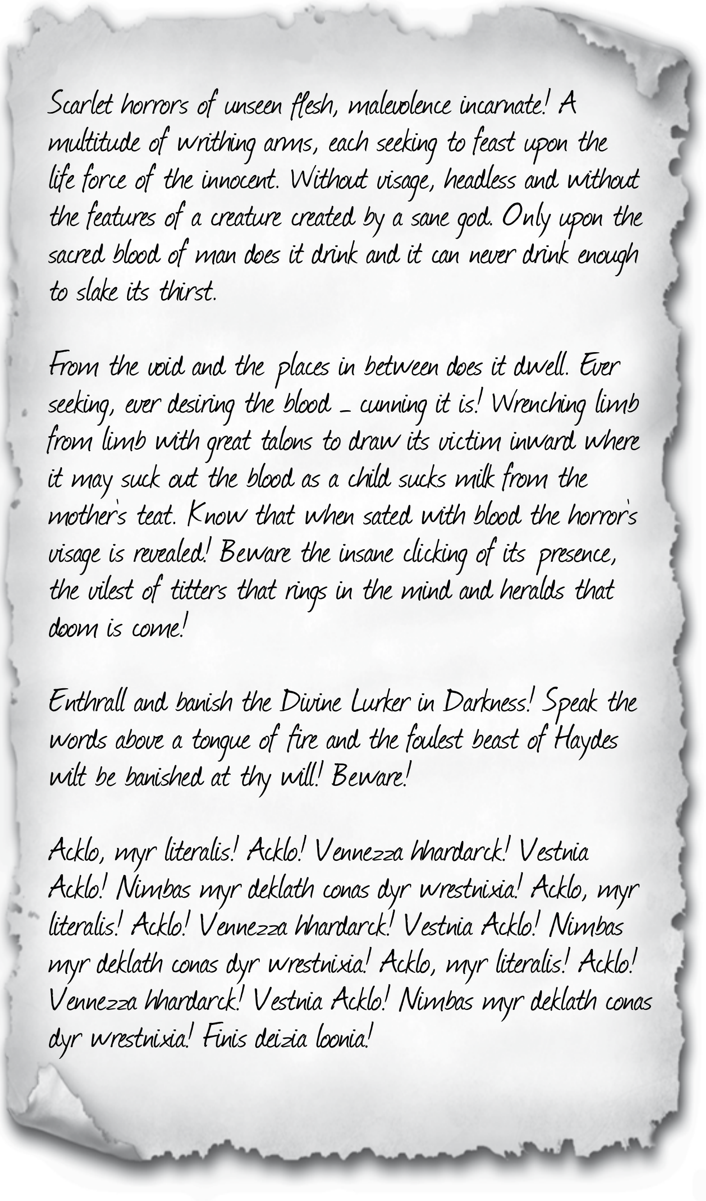
– Journal of Reverend George Barsford, dated 23rd September 1667.

Keepers Note on Handout 6

The ritual chant transcribed by Reverend Greap is the *Vach-Viraj Incantation* and can be used to dispel Cyaegha. Chance to learn is INT x 4, 1 POW and 1d6 SAN to cast.

Appendix 2.3: King Player Handouts

Player Handout 1: The Divine Lurker in Darkness



Scarlet horrors of unseen flesh, malevolence incarnate! A multitude of writhing arms, each seeking to feast upon the life force of the innocent. Without visage, headless and without the features of a creature created by a sane god. Only upon the sacred blood of man does it drink and it can never drink enough to slake its thirst.

From the void and the places in between does it dwell. Ever seeking, ever desiring the blood – cunning it is! Wrenching limb from limb with great talons to draw its victim inward where it may suck out the blood as a child sucks milk from the mother's teat. Know that when sated with blood the horror's visage is revealed! Beware the insane clicking of its presence, the vilest of titters that rings in the mind and heralds that doom is come!

Enthrall and banish the Divine Lurker in Darkness! Speak the words above a tongue of fire and the foulest beast of Haydes wilt be banished at thy will! Beware!

Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza Whardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza Whardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Acklo, myr literalis! Acklo! Vennezza Whardarck! Vestnia Acklo! Nimbas myr deklath conas dyr wrestnixia! Finis deizia loonia!

Appendix 2.4: My Little Sister Player Handouts

Preparation Notes

You will need six envelopes for each player. In the first one, place their character sheet and label the envelope:

Player X – OPEN FIRST

Where 'X' denotes the character number (1-6).

Copy out each memory listed below or photocopy them and cut them out – removing the character and memory numbers – and place one memory in each of the next four envelopes and label each with the appropriate character name. It is recommended that you prepare one character at a time to avoid any mix-ups.

In the last envelope place the false memory. If possible, have this on a slightly different paper (heavier paper or a different colour), then label it with the appropriate character name. Then shuffle that player's stack of envelopes. Repeat this process for all of the characters. At the end you should have a stack of six envelopes for each player.

The reason for putting the false memory on different paper is that towards the end of the scenario (after all envelopes have been opened), the character who has lost the least sanity can be taken to one side (at the Keeper's discretion), and told that some of their memories 'feel' different; that they don't seem so real. The 'feel' refers to the fact that the false memories actually do feel different – they are printed on a different kind of paper. This is particularly effective if some paranoia has built up in the group already. It would be very easy to maintain the whole deceit to the end of the scenario, but your players may enjoy it more if some of them start to figure out what is going on.

The character sheets for this scenario are simple. Just a first name, stats and skills. No place of birth, colleges, nationality or so on.

Envelope Contents for Each Player

Character Sheets

Player 1

Jennifer, Age 35

STR 14	DEX 12	INT 12	CON 11
SIZ 16	APP 08	POW 11	EDU 14
SAN 55		Hit Points: 13	

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Bargain 20%
Computer Use 15%
Conceal 25%
Cookery 33%
Credit rating 25%
Dodge 24%
Drive 25%
Fast Talk 40%
First Aid 50%
Grapple 50%
Handgun 35%
Hide Law 35%
Listen 50%
Locksmith 30%
Martial Arts 10%
Nightstick 40%
Persuade 35%
Psychology 30%
Sneak 35%
Spot Hidden 50%
Taser 50%
Track 25%
Throw 40%

Player 2

Jonathan Caddick, Age 31

STR 13	DEX 17	INT 13	CON 15
SIZ 13	APP 17	POW 12	EDU 18
SAN 60		Hit Points: 12	

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Accounting 25%
Anthropology 30%
Drawing 25%
Bargain 15%
Computer Use 30%
Credit Rating 50%
Dodge 22%
Drive 30%
Fast Talk 35%
Law 50%
Library Use 50%
Medicine 15%
Occult 15%
Other Language (French 30%, Latin 25%)
Persuade 40%
Pharmacy 35%
Photography 30%
Psychoanalysis 50%
Psychology 70%
Spot Hidden 30%
Swim 35%

Player 3

Joshua Balderstone, Age 29

STR 14 DEX 12 INT 10 CON 15
SIZ 15 APP 08 POW 09 EDU 11
SAN 45 Hit Points: 15
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Accounting 35%
Computer Use 80%
Cryptography 35%
Electrical Repair 60%
Library Use 25%
Pharmacy 65%
Photography 55%
Psychology 30%
Spot Hidden 60%
Biology 35%
Conceal 55%
Dodge 40%
Fast Talk 25%
Mechanical Repair 25%
Persuade 31%
Physics 45%
Sneak 25%

Player 4

Michael Nash, Age 34

STR 13 DEX 14 INT 18 CON 09
SIZ 11 APP 15 POW 13 EDU 16
SAN 45 Hit Points: 10
Damage Bonus: none

Skills:
Climb 50%
Dodge 30%
Fast Talk 40%
Grapple 45%
Head Butt 35%
Jump 35%
Listen 35%
Occult 10%
Sneak 35%
Throw 35%
Club 50%
Drive 60%
Fist 60%
Handgun 50%
Hide 30%
Kick 45%
Mechanical Repair 45%
Psychology 25%
Spot Hidden 30%

Player 5

Suzanna Hillmarton, Age 28

STR 14 DEX 16 INT 15 CON 10
SIZ 12 APP 18 POW 10 EDU 20
SAN 50 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none

Skills:
Art (Dance) 35%
Club 50%
Dodge 50%
Fast Talk 25%
Fist 70%
Hide 20%
Kick 60%
Martial Arts 50%
Persuade 35%
Sneak 35%
Throw 35%
Climb 50%
Credit Rating 35%
Drive 25%
First Aid 40%
Fighting Knife 40%
Jump 50%
Listen 35%
Medicine 15%
Psychology 35%
Spot Hidden 35%

Player 6

Thomas Hamilton, Age 19

STR 15 DEX 14 INT 08 CON 14
SIZ 14 APP 16 POW 12 EDU 12
SAN 60 Hit Points: 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills:
Climb 50%
Drive 50%
Fist 55%
Hide 30%
Mechanical Repair 40%
Photography 25%
Spot Hidden 50%
Swim 62%
Dodge 28%
Fast Talk 40%
Grapple 30%
Jump 40%
Navigate 25%
Sneak 35%
Surfing 50%
Throw 65%

Initial Information (Envelope 1)

Copy the following, cut out and hand to each of the players as they 'wake up' at the start of the scenario. At this point, they do not remember their names, however, as Keeper, be sure that you know their number (one to six) and correlate this number with the sets of six envelopes.

Player 1 (Jennifer)

You are an overweight woman, however you are very confident and you couldn't care less about what other people think you look like. Your brown hair is cut very short.

You are wary of others and slow to trust anyone's judgement other than your own. You have an urge to take control of the group and are sometimes quite tactless and impatience. You have a craving for sweet things.

Player 2 (Jonathan)

You are male, rather flabby but very well tanned. Your hair is shoulder length but receding on top.

You feel vulnerable and perhaps cover this with false bravado. You would love a cigarette right now. There are raw patches on your finger tips that you find yourself biting when nervous or anxious.

Player 3 (Joshua)

You are male, skinny and your hair is thinning. Your fingers are long and you have a habit of twitching them – you wish you could stop doing this.

You feel as if a weight has been lifted from your shoulders, leaving you light and happy. All is good with the world.

Player 4 (Michael)

You are a muscular man and have many tattoos on your arms – depicting an oriental dragon, a skull with flames, a heart with the name Suzie across it, a laughing devil and a .44 magnum handgun. Your hair is shaved and you have a moustache.

You are wary of others and feel that you should rely on your own talents, rather than be in debt to others. You may soon find that your animal instincts surface easily.

Player 5 (Suzanna)

You are female, very attractive and have clear muscle definition on your forearms and abdomen. Your hair is shoulder length and blonde.

You are wary of others and you have an urge to take control of the group.

Player 6 (Thomas)

You are younger than the others, tall and slim. Your skin is tanned and tightly muscled. Your hair is short and bleached blonde.

You have a sense of humour that seems irrepressible and a very lazy attitude.

Character Memories (1-4)

Player 1

Player 1, Memory 1

Horses. Always horses. Your mother loved them more than she loved you. Luckily, father was well paid to cover the expense. You never took to riding, despite the many lessons that your mother made you take. In the end she was happy for you to sit and watch while you munched your way through a packet of chocolate digestives.

Player 1, Memory 2

You miss routine. Everything in your life was dominated by the clock. Always the banging of many doors and the turning of keys. Lights out at a set hour. The stink of slopping out. The monotony. The uniform. The idiots around you. The lowlife scum. How you would like to make them pay.

Player 1, Memory 3

You've met Joshua before. He needs to be punished for his sins. The filthy little punk killed people with computers. And Jonathan – you've met him as well – he's a woolly liberal do-gooder. You could do without all this crap. If only you had the money you would pack it all in. You would not want to return to that life. You will show them.

Player 1, Memory 4

Restraint lessons. They were fun – a real perk of your job. You loved the power that you could hold over people. And the uniform, you liked that too. You remember Michael, he seemed to have respect for you somehow, and perhaps you feel some in return. It's hard to remember whose side he was on...

Player 2

Player 2, Memory 1

You remember playing chess at primary school; your elder brother showed you how. You were pretty good at it too. You were in the football team as a reserve, but soon dropped out of that when you moved up to a larger school with more boys to pick from. That's how it was at school, always watching the other boys doing things, never actually doing them yourself.

Player 2, Memory 2

You have an insight into what makes people tick. That was your job, analyzing people, writing profiles of their psychological makeup. You actually had a white coat, clipboard and pen, but usually you wore a suit. In the pocket you carried a pass card, an ID that let you enter a secure unit where you worked. There were concrete steps then a heavy door with a bell that you rang. Someone opened and checked your ID. The people inside were dangerous. Not bad, but dangerous. You wanted bring out their good side, to show they could be redeemed. Are the people around you bad? Do they need your help?

Player 2, Memory 3

You know Michael; he's a dangerous killer who dealt in drugs and guns. He was locked away when you knew him. You did what you could for him but eventually you stopped seeing him when you knew that no more could be done. You have also met Jennifer before. You remember her in a uniform. She was hard and treated you with disdain.

Player 2, Memory 4

> You remember waiting for a take-away meal at the local Chinese restaurant. There was a fight going on outside. You stayed inside, hidden, until the police came. If only you could do something to get away from all of this, something to make people respect you. You dream of winning a big book deal and enough money to never have to work again, then you could write about the good side of people without having to actually meet them.

Player 3

Player 3, Memory 1

> You remember being at a birthday party; you were eight. You had friends and presents. Your mum hid a thimble and all the children searched for it. Then you had birthday tea; crisps, sandwiches and sausage rolls. Your Gran told one of your friends off for throwing jelly. Simple pleasures. You didn't need drugs to be happy back then. But, then again, they don't make you happy now. All they do is help you forget and that's a form of happiness for you. But you need the drugs too. You've begun to feel short tempered and twitchy now. You need a hit.

Player 3, Memory 2

> The experience of installing the massive hard drive in your new machine was marred somewhat by the police turning up at your door and arresting you in connection with the deaths of seven people. You never meant for any of that to happen. Knock out the security system in the hospital, your friends said. All they wanted was the drugs. The computers you get to use now are rubbish. You are not evil. You deserve a chance to do some good in the world. You won't turn down a second chance.

Player 3, Memory 3

> You know Jennifer; she doesn't like you. She's a bully. She locks you in a little room and turns out the lights. You spend a lot of time in that room with other men. Men you don't know. Men you are frightened of. You want to be free. That's why you're here – isn't it?

Player 3, Memory 4

> You remember the Olympics. All those fit people doing amazing things. The only room you could watch it in was very crowded and smoky. They would not let you have a TV set in your room. Not allowed anything electronic – no telling what you might accomplish with it. Still you saw them on TV, running the streets, breathing the free air. The air you breathed was stale and smelt of urine, body odour and smoke.

Player 4

Player 4, Memory 1

> You remember being a little boy and having a succession of bedrooms that weren't yours – always other people's possessions, other children's toys. You remember men shouting at you for no reason; was one of them your father?
>
> You had a small red toy tractor that you took everywhere. People said one day you'd be a farmer. You saw the fields once, a long time ago from a bus window. You lost the tractor somewhere and with it the dream of working the land. You were trapped as a child and trapped as an adult. The little boy is there in your head, his eyes overflowing with tears. You empathize with him, as tears well in your eyes.

Player 4, Memory 2

You know what a man means by the look in his eyes. You can tell a con man from a killer. You've spilt blood before and you're good at it – but only when it's right. You decide when it's right. You know about weapons, you can visualize knives and pistols in your hands. It feels good. You can remember the sounds and smells of gunshots and death.

You remember a man in front of you, cash in his hands. He was too late. Too late for... something. You had to *do* him. There was no choice.

Player 4, Memory 3

You have met Jonathan before. The two of you were in a small room talking. He didn't say much. You kept talking but he refused to answer your questions. Somehow that made you feel better. Then the two of you stopped meeting and you felt betrayed.

You've also met Jennifer before, but you didn't know her name. She doesn't like you. She spat in your face then pushed you into a room and locked the door. She's a strong woman and you can respect that. Bang, bang, keys turning.

Player 4, Memory 4

You remember watching TV late at night; an old black and white movie about something that was found in the ice. You were in your room, a cigarette in your hand and a can of beer nearby. Music drifted from the apartment next door, the sounds of rap music thudding through the thin walls. You were living a life then, but that was a long time ago. You changed channels to check the lottery numbers. No luck again. You'd do anything to win big.

Player 5

Player 5, Memory 1

You remember going to gymnastics class. It was early on a Sunday morning and the weather was very cold. You waited outside for ages – for some reason the class had been cancelled but no one had told you. Someone, you can't remember, turned up and took you home and there was much talk about how cold you were and how blue your lips were. It didn't matter much to you. You have determination and self-discipline.

Player 5, Memory 2

You are a fighter. You remember training people in combat techniques. Hand-to-hand combat. It made no difference to you whether your opponent was male or female, you could handle them all. Always in the gym, dojo or a hall of some kind. If life is a big game, you for one won't be a loser.

Player 5, Memory 3

Your father was in hospital for a heart bypass operation, however there was a complication. You had been abroad and were unable to see him before he went in. Someone hacked the hospital computers and the power to his ward went out at a critical moment during the operation. People were prosecuted in court. Joshua was there in the court, speaking – you remember his face – but he's older now. Why was he there?

Player 5, Memory 4

You remember your pet dog, a lurcher called Julius. You took him for walks in the early morning. You remember leaving him with someone while you came here – they said that they would take good care of him. It was good that there was only the dog to worry about and no other dependents.

Player 6

Player 6, Memory 1

> You remember playing with your dad on a Saturday afternoon; you were just a kid at the time. He spent ages with you that day, playing ball and flying a kite. It was a good time. Afterward you went indoors and your mum had made sausages and fried eggs. Recently you talked to her on the telephone; she was crying and wishing you luck.

Player 6, Memory 2

> You miss the sea, the rush of the waves, the salt in your mouth and the wind making sounds. You miss the movement, gliding through the water, the excitement. You miss the company and the sense of excitement. You miss the thrill of riding the waves.

Player 6, Memory 3

> Jennifer reminds you strongly of your mother... In fact it could be her. She was a strict woman who was impatient with people, however she cared for you and you felt only love. You love your mother very much.

Player 6, Memory 4

> You were signing on for unemployment benefit and you looked around at the misfits and losers – what were you doing here with them? Every Wednesday morning at ten you have to be there. It's been a while since your last visit – maybe you're overdue? You deserve more, much, much more and you are prepared to take risks to get it.

Character False Memories

Player 1, False Memory

> When the first prisoners arrived you were taken into a room and briefed. No one outside was to know about this. These prisoners were not normal. The security on this unit was under army control. It was up to you to keep these things under lock and key and keep a tight surveillance. The briefing was right, the prisoners weren't people at all. These things belonged in late night movies. Hell, the stench of the things and the noises they made. The rooms they died in had to be cleared of eggs. You heard talk of a secret government department that dealt with UFOs – something about greys, crash sites and government plots.

Player 2, False Memory

> In your role as a government advisor, during the crisis, you saw a lot of things that were kept from the public. Of course, they couldn't be kept secret forever. Warning bells began ringing when new islands appeared on the satellite photos overnight. Several cities were wiped out by tsunami and, across the world, coastal areas began to flood. It was then that THEY began to come from the skies. You can't see them in your mind, only a memory, as if from a nightmare – a sensation without an image. Some sided with the aliens, but you saw through their bluff. If it had not been for your advice then mankind might have been extinguished in those dark days.

Player 3, False Memory

> When the war started the authorities needed all of the manpower they could muster. Hi-tech operatives were a scarce commodity and you were quickly trained. There hadn't been a war like this before, the US had some kind of pact with the greys and together they were taking over the planet. Islands rose and fell as the stars turned on their vast silent wheels. Your base was attacked. You remember hiding in a cupboard. You must have passed out...

Player 4, False Memory

You remember when they came. You cannot see them in your mind; only a memory, as if from a nightmare – a sensation without an image. Out of the skies they flooded down, picking people off like hawks catching mice. You became part of a team defending a local stronghold, armed with shotguns and grenades. You came upon one of the creatures in a deserted street. It was feeding off the body of a child and it was clearly wounded. Not feeling threatened, you took a moment to observe how the thing's proboscis extended from four interlinked mandibles, the leathery wings devoid of feathers and the mass of rope-like appendages that coiled loosely below it on the ground. Somehow it sensed your presence and without moving, it began to speak to you. Inside your head you felt its cold presence. You heard alien words that you could not understand. As your mind tried to grasp at the creature's meaning, your finger tightened its squeeze on the trigger of your gun.

Player 5, False Memory

When they came, you took control of a small faction of fighters and formed a resistance. The memory is vague and ill-formed, more sensation than a clear image. You fought hard, but still they came, from the sea and the rivers. Everywhere became flooded and you had to keep moving to higher ground. Apparently, it was because of some astronomical alignment. People were dying everywhere. When the chance of a way out came you took it, even if it was towards those same stars that had caused all of the trouble.

Player 6, False Memory

You were out at sea surfing and you hit a big wave and went under. When you surfaced you heard screaming. People were running to get out of the water. You turned to look but could see nothing. You followed the others. After a while, someone told you what had happened. A huge head had appeared out at sea and a vast arm had scooped up several people, before the whole thing disappeared once more from sight. That was the beginning of the end of life as you knew it. Islands rose in the Pacific and doom came to mankind.

This new collection of horror scenarios for the Call of Cthulhu role playing game features five tales of horror and the weird, set within the green and pleasant land of England. Each scenario focuses upon a different time period, from the streets of Victorian London to the far future when the End is almost nigh.

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>
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>
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>
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>
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Although each scenario can be played as part of an existing campaign, they also come with a set of pre-generated player characters, allowing all to be played and run with the minimum of effort.

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